

**Rape's Power to Dismember Women's Lives:  
Personal Realities and Cultural Forms**

**A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the  
School of Theology at Claremont**

**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**by  
Ruth Elizabeth Krall**

**May 1990**

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## Abstract

### Rape's Power to Dismember Women's Lives:

#### Personal Realities and Cultural Forms

Ruth Elizabeth Krall

The story of rape in women's lives is one of personal and cultural dismemberment. Individually and collectively women are threatened by rape.

The inability of many women to reconstitute their lives after rape and to participate in self-healing raises two questions: (1) Why do women have trouble healing after an event of rape? and (2) What can be learned from a study of rape as a cultural form that may assist women to create healing for themselves?

Utilizing a method of thick description described by anthropologist Clifford Geertz, the present work employs extensive literature reviews in the social sciences, the clinical sciences, theory criticism, and social mythology to identify central themes of rape.

One common theme emerges from the literature review. Rape is intended to terrify women into submission and obedience and it does. The anticipatory fear of rape in women's lives; the panic experienced during an event of rape; and the terror which plagues



women long after a rape event has ended are all dismembering realities in women's lives.

The three major theories (loss and grief, stress, and crisis) used to identify women's recovery patterns after rape are stage theories. While recognizing the initial usefulness of stage theories in clinical literature about rape, this dissertation asserts that it is now necessary to examine alternative models.

Two additional theories are examined for their usefulness in clarifying women's recovery processes after rape. These are anxiety theory as described by psychiatrist Harry Stack Sullivan and double-bind theory as described by anthropologist Gregory Bateson. Both theories deal with the epistemology of human learning as an interpersonal process; both explain the pathologies of dissociation; both are recursive theories in which models of circular process take precedence over models of lineal progression.

The usefulness of both of these theories is demonstrated. Alternative hypotheses about recovery processes are developed. Clinical ramifications of these hypotheses are identified and explored in brief.

## Acknowledgments

The process of graduate work is never completed in isolation even though many of its individual moments are constructed in loneliness. The nurturing support of friends has been a steadying presence in my life during these mid-life years of study and writing.

Members of my consciousness-raising group at the University of Arizona (Shirley, Eliana, Joan, Terry, and JoAnn) asked provocative and disturbing questions about my life and work. During more than three years of intense and regular conversation, they introduced me to American feminism and helped me to reframe my understanding of women's lives.

Anna Bowman's faithful friendship has continued to nourish my spirit. Our personal and professional conversations have continually created new awarenesses about the complex realities of women's lives in North America.

Two undergraduate classmates of mine elicit special appreciation. Esther Jones Hackman and Phyllis Lehman Collier shared the years of my earliest professionalization into nursing and have remained

steadfast friends. In addition, Phyllis assisted the early research process by locating medical and nursing literature which was not readily available to me in Goshen.

Molly Engle has continued to push at the edges of my curiosity about how women's lives unfold the way they do. Our shared professional interests (about the function of theory in intellectual life) keep our conversations heated and lively.

Ed Gelardin has always been willing to discuss clinical issues in the psychiatric treatment of clients. When I began to talk with him about my growing interests in story and paradoxical communication, he introduced me to therapy literature written by and about Milton Erickson. This literature, in turn, led me to read Gregory Bateson.

Stuart J. Roh's love and emotional support during the early years of graduate work provided a sheltering home when fears of failure were the greatest. His was a forceful presence in my life for more than fifteen years. I acknowledge our history of love and care for each other as essential to my decision to pursue graduate studies.

During the Claremont years, many women assisted as midwives in the birthing of a new self. Nelle Morton touched and eased wild places of woman pain through her continuing work as a feminist theologian. Anita Robinson provided moments of regular life and good conversation over many evening meals. Phyllis Johnson shared her beloved Frogs, her friends and her home. Barbara Jean Hofrichter became friend, co-learner and sister. Linda Fillipi urged me to think with intuition and gentleness. Daryl Smith and Nancy Wada-McKee provided space and time in which I could think and work. Daily conversations with Fran McConnel and her willingness to share illegal midnight swims created sanity within insane moments. Hilary Schrier, Dryden Rannefeld, Caren Weinberg, and Deedee Uchiyamada were loving undergraduate friends with whom I shared life at Scripps College.

Reference librarians from Goshen College, Indiana University at South Bend, Miles Laboratories, Notre Dame University, and the School of Theology at Claremont have all given freely of their advice and professional assistance.

Finally, I acknowledge the faculty and my classmates at the School of Theology at Claremont. With them I have learned to think theologically. Most especially, I am grateful for the contribution made to my life by each of my dissertation committee members. Dan Rhoades has demonstrated the ethics of healing by his commitment to relational teaching. Charlotte Ellen has challenged and comforted me as we have discussed feminist theory and the therapy of women who have experienced rape. Mary Elizabeth Moore has encouraged me to express my abilities at their edges rather than at the safe center. Howard Clinebell has been friend and mentor. Each of these four persons has assisted me towards becoming. There can be no greater gift. I acknowledge that gift with the promise of allowing it to flow through me to others who enter my life as friends, colleagues, clients, or students.

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## General Introduction

The presence of rape in any woman's life potentially functions as a dismembering reality for all women. Women's anticipatory fear of rape accompanies them everywhere. A woman needs only to hear unexpected footsteps echoing her own to know a thin metallic taste of fear that escalates into anxiety when she cannot immediately ascertain that she is safe. During a rape event, many women survivors experience an intense fear of death as well as a determined effort to survive the rapist's assault. Even after a rape event is over, women continue to be troubled by terrors.

The inability of many women to reconstitute their lives after rape raises two questions: (1) Why do women have trouble healing after an event of rape? and (2) What can be learned from a study of rape as a cultural form that may assist women to create healing for themselves?

Utilizing the methodology of thick description as described by Clifford Geertz (1971, 1973, 1980, 1983), this dissertation seeks to contextualize events of rape within a culture that appears to sanction sexual violence against women and small children. In order to study women's experiences during and after rape, rape is examined as a cultural text. As a text, or cultural

form, rape can be studied and read. By this reading, it is hoped that two kinds of understanding can emerge: understanding of context; and understanding of the form itself (Geertz, 1980, pp. 103-104).

The goal of such reading and interpreting is to learn the enclosed cultural faith which, recursively, reveals the whole. As Geertz comments, the hermeneutical issues of reader and text converge in such an approach (1980, p. 130). By means of the interaction of reader-observer with the text (cultural form), new understandings emerge. By examining the cultural meanings of rape, new understandings emerge about the meanings of rape for women who survive a rapist's assault. Conversely, by examining women's experiences of rape events, new understandings emerge about the cultural meanings of rape.

The first section of this dissertation summarizes an extensive literature review. Chapter 1 establishes the historical background of the anti-rape movement in the United States. Chapter 2 identifies multiple forms of sexual violence against women as the context for women's experiences of rape. A discussion of the demography of rape in the United States follows.

Chapter 3 summarizes social science research about rape and the aftermath of rape in women's lives. Several major constructs from social psychology are

discussed as they relate to social science rape research. These constructs include victim precipitation theories, just world theories, attractiveness research, and motivation research.

Chapter 4 deals with clinical theories and rape research. Three separate stage theory models are explored: crisis theory, loss and grief theory, and stress theory. In addition, the diagnostic category of post-traumatic stress disorder is discussed.

The second section identifies cultural stories about women as forms of social mythology. Three separate social myths are examined. Chapter 5 examines patriarchal Christianity and its understandings of women's nature. Chapter 6 summarizes contemporary research into the power of pornographic representation. Chapter 7 reviews the teachings of classical psychoanalysis about the nature of women's development and consciousness. Each of these three myths contains a doctrine of women's nature which contributes to the cultural form of rape.

Several themes emerge from the first and second sections. The first of these themes is that rape is a cultural form in addition to being an event in the life of any individual woman. That form can be examined by means of thick description in order to identify the cultural values of the form.

The second theme which emerges is identification of rape as an event which terrifies women. Pre-existing fear of rape among women becomes terror during a rape event. The presence of dissociative spectrum issues in the lives of survivors is noted. Section 2 identifies terror as a central factor in women's delayed recovery from rape.

A third theme which emerges is the role of obedience commands during a rape event. The issue of authority and obedience surfaces because rapists demand total obedience from women in a field of male-initiated violence from which women are not permitted to escape.

The third section attempts to deal constructively with the themes and issues raised in the first two sections. The dismembering power of rape in women's lives is examined by means of anxiety theory (Sullivan, 1953a, 1953b, 1954, 1962). Chapter 8 summarizes Sullivan's theory while Chapter 9 applies it to women's experiences of terror during and after rape.

A woman's response to a rapist's demands is often one of terrified obedience. The man uses the authority of physical strength or weaponry to enforce her submission to his will. Chapter 10 examines rape's colonization of the minds of women during events of violence-enforced obedience. The rapist's obedience demands during rape are analyzed as an extended form of

the pathological communication pattern known as the double-bind (Bateson, 1966, 1968, 1972, 1976a, 1976b, 1977, 1978, 1981; Bateson, et al., 1968).

Chapter 11 examines the interaction of rape events in the lives of women with the experiences of women who seek to help them recover after rape. Issues for listening women are identified. The woman who hopes to help another woman (be that woman a client or a friend) journeys through the wounds of rape seeking healing for herself as well. Listening women confront the psychological and spiritual dilemmas of terror and rage which are inherent in the cultural text of rape. Wishing to become healers of rape's wounds, they confront the paradox of being wounded themselves. Coming to understand, along with S. M. Gearhart (1979), that all women represent herself, the listening woman learns simultaneously to hear both sets of wounding: the survivor's and her own.

Section One  
Of Shields and Stories

-- we ask: Is it good for women or bad for women?

Redstockings of the Women's Liberation Movement  
Feminist Revolution

Introduction

In L. Andrews' books about her apprenticeship with a Cree medicine woman she documents her journey as a European-American woman into the ancient medicine wheel traditions of the American Indians. Called in a vision by unknown spirits to find a magical wedding basket, Andrews goes in search of a woman-guide named Agnes Whistling Elk, only to find that the ancient Indian healing woman has been waiting for her in Manitoba (1983). Andrews relates stories about the medicine woman's teachings to her about woman-power. In these teachings of the old wise woman she confronts a spirit world of healing, unifying power, as well as one of attacking, negating power.

With the assistance of Agnes and Ruby Plenty Chiefs, a second powerful medicine woman, Andrews retrieves the vision's wedding basket from the sorcerer Red Dog who had stolen it from the medicine women and



who had thereby bound its woman-power to his own man-power. By her act of retrieval, Andrews begins to claim her own power as a woman. She becomes an apprentice to Agnes Whistling Elk.

Flight of the Seventh Moon (1984) records Andrews' initiation into the sisterhood of the shields, a time Andrews later recalls as initiation into her womanliness and selfhood (Preface). Flight opens in a moment of acute danger for Andrews during an encounter with the sorcerer Red Dog in a luxury Beverly Hills hotel. In a vision, Andrews hears her Indian teacher's voice, "You have no shields, no protection. You are wide open and asking for attack. If you don't want Red Dog to attack you, you must learn to make shields" (1984, p. 4). A bit later, still in California, Andrews receives the teaching that she, having begun to claim her own power by her own actions, needs now to learn to ask the spirits for protection and direction. She returns to Manitoba where Agnes again awaits her. There she continues her apprenticeship. Both Agnes and Ruby tell her that she has not learned to conserve, hold and use the power that she is beginning to attract to her as part of her journey into the circle of power.

Ruby creates a moment for learning when she unexpectedly hands Andrews a paper cup filled with hot

tea. The cup is full of holes and hot tea spurts in all directions. The teaching follows immediately, "You are like a sieve. Your power is leaking out of you, pouring out. You are getting ever weaker. You have no protection at all. You are open and inviting trouble by your attitude. All manner of things could hurt you right now" (1984, p. 57). Again Agnes insists, "You must learn to be a woman of ability, and by that I mean you must learn how to protect yourself. . . . You must make a decision to learn to help yourself. You must learn to make medicine shields" (p. 57). By a series of events and mystical experiences, Andrews learns how to create the necessary four shields which she later displays.

Carefully, I unwrapped my four shields and placed them in their four directions around me. I was proud as I did this. I concentrated on the symbolism that I had put into each shield. My dreams and visions were an aspect of the very form and fabric of which they were built. The shields stood for the concept of who I am in my completeness. Together, they were the ultimate medicine wheel, the map from my outer to my inner being. To conceive of them was to conceive of the mystery of my oneness. I had never set them out before. I was overwhelmed by their beauty and the manner in which they made me perceive myself. (1984, pp. 194-195)

One evening as Agnes and she are out walking, Red Dog becomes visible to her as a man standing on a hill above them. She attempts to point him out to Agnes. Yet, in her vision, he shifts position, becoming like a

raven, calling to her from all sides. In telling the story, she recalls that Agnes patted her knee and asked, "Are you sure you don't want him to be here?" (p. 124). Her negative response to her teacher elicits further teaching from Agnes.

There are many who coax their fears, and the fears are sure to follow. . . . Quit coaxing, Lynn. When you are hunting, one way to call your prey is to find a place in your mind that welcomes him. Your prey will become curious and come and you can have him. Your fears function in the same manner. It is the enemy luring you to your death. Quit coaxing and stay out of sight. Otherwise, you will draw your enemy and it might not go well for you. . . . You are asking power to bring him to you and you'd better stop, I warn you. You are bringing powerful forces to you that mean you no good. (p. 124)

Identification of shielding as a necessary form of women's power also assumes a central role in S. M. Gearhart's utopian novel, The Wanderground (1979). The land of the Wanderground, created when women and the earth together committed themselves to stopping male violence against nature and woman, is a women's space where guns do not fire, animal traps do not close, and sexual violence does not occur. However, outside its boundaries in the City, a pervasive atmosphere of violence remains.

In one section of the book, the woman Alaka, returns to the home of her friend, Seja, from an outpost of the Wanderground. In her travels toward Seja the two become linked in a form of psychic

conversation known as channel-joining. Seja, without warning Alaka, tells her that hunters have intruded into the outer edges of the Wanderground and are again able to use weapons to kill there. They are killing deer, most especially does. Alaka, overcome with pain and rage, becomes dizzy and falls to the earth. Seja chides, "That's what you get for not shielding" (p. 15).

In the morning after Alaka's arrival she senses Seja's inner despair and replicates it within herself. Neither woman is shielded from the other's psychic processes. Alaka begins their conversation with bird-rumors that potent-violent men (rapists) again roam freely outside the boundaries of the City. Seja's response is to begin pacing; "I've told no one, Alaka. I'd hoped it happened to her long ago--not recently. Or I hoped it was only a nightmare that she had made real in order to purge it. Or something" (1979, p. 21). She describes finding a woman named Margaret on the outskirts of the Wanderground. Margaret was clattering around in a full suit of medieval armor.

Two men. She was taken by two men. In the short hills far east of the City. Then they dressed her in that armor as a joke. Took it out of some school museum and set her loose laughing and throwing rocks at her as she scrambled away from them through the brush. She didn't tell me any of this. She couldn't talk. Or mindstretch. But she opened to me and let me read her recalls. (p. 21)

As she becomes overpowered by nausea and vomiting, Alaka remembers she has again forgotten to shield herself, allowing her own lower channels open. As Seja again experiences Margaret's terror and outrage, Alaka too begins to absorb, in her own self, the armored woman's experience. She, who is a remember-guide in the community of women, is now in the "grip of an emotional turbulence so strong it racked her body" (p. 22).

Seja also becomes overwhelmed by the inner force of the story she has remembered. She drops to the ground in a fetal position where she begins screaming.

Seja had yielded entirely to the memory, yielded with no protection. She was clearly in full retrosense, tensed in rigid paralysis. . . . Inside her head, Margaret's ugly drama was still raging; apparently even the remember rooms had not prepared Seja for this more visceral experience of rape. (p. 23)

Watching Seja, Alaka recognizes a familiar pattern, that of an uncontrollable rising anger. She has seen this in women in the remember rooms and reminds herself that "anger inevitably followed any recall of rape, particularly if the recall has been even slightly unguarded" (p. 24).

Alaka takes time to construct a personal shield, regaining self-control so she can move in the "familiar patterns of a remember guide" (p. 23). The task of a remember-guide in the remember rooms is one of

assisting women in a safe place and time to recall and remember the grotesque atrocities which once affected them. The community of women travels to the enclosed remember rooms so that memories of the hill women's escape from violence shall not be forgotten by the generations of women. Each woman's experience and escape is added to the vessels of memory kept alive in each woman. Within the remember rooms, the women are guided by the remember-guides so that they are not destroyed by the memories and by the knowing.

For Alaka, the memory shields of a remember-guide allow her to be the means of channeling memories of thousands of rapes, killings and tortures without being destroyed in her own inner soft-self. She seeks to guide Seja so that she is not destructive in her hard-self to herself or others.

Even with her memory shield in place, Alaka senses the "unequivocal purity of the ragings she found within the other woman: a naked and unadulterated desire to kill" (p. 24). Seja has become, in Alaka's awareness, a woman warrior with a simple maxim to live by, "He who rapes must die" (p. 25).

In these two stories, several shielding metaphors are used. For Andrews, the teaching is how to use her own power to avoid the sorcerer's attack; it includes the development of an inner awareness of the need to

avoid luring the sorcerer (predator) to herself as his victim (prey). She must learn to avoid creating an internal reality of fear where his power is able to find a home. From this internal space the sorcerer can then lure her to her own destruction. She is taught she can shield her body-self from Red Dog by responsible control of her fears.

In addition, she is taught the necessity of closing the "holes" in the self's boundaries to avoid leakage of power. For Andrews to learn this lesson, it is necessary that the medicine women guide her through a physical and psychic conditioning process of envisioning and creating shields for herself. A physical, visual metaphor (shields) is linked with a kinesthetic one (actual construction of animal skin shields) and a psychic one (the spirit guides who appear in nature to instruct the novice in the painting of the shields).

B. Medicine Eagle (1988) comments that whole-body exercises accomplish powerful transformations which talking and catharsis may be unable to replicate (p. 215). The careful construction of physical shields represents the inner psychic or spiritual ones also. Both the inner and the outer shields create and represent defenses against the giveaway loss of inner power, that giveaway which lures danger. Medicine

Eagle writes of her own healing work with people, "The body can be "programmed" through physical movement to carry out complex agendas in the larger world" (p. 214).

In the Wanderground, the shields are psychic, without a material representation; they issue from an inner gathering of resources to bear the pain of personal remembering. In addition to a woman's internal process of shielding, there is a communal process as well. By means of remember rooms with prepared guides, the women create a communal ritual for remembering that strengthens their shared life together.

For both women, Andrews and Alaka, the shields are constructed to empower the self so that the personal self, as well as selves of others, may be protected. These stories intuit the wisdom that in telling, hearing and remembering stories of violence directed towards them, there is great potential for women's loss of power. However, by shielding, the potential becomes one of self-healing and the strengthening of one's power for assistance to others.

With the story-teaching of the shields in place, we are reminded that discussions about rape are potentially wounding to women, and perhaps, to some men as well. The experience of actual rape wounds and



scars its victim. The story of another woman's rape also wounds and scars additional women who hear about it.

A common response among women to an unexpected story of sexual violence is the experience of severe pain in the solar plexis followed by rage. Often there may be hyperventilation as well. One response in the listener may be an agitated physical response. Yet women, who are prepared to hear and be with women who tell rape stories, do not automatically and viscerally respond with the same severity of physical distress. A rape story, heard by women in unshielded ways, is apt to wound its hearer and activate rage. In addition, it raises fears which may drain off the woman's ability (power) to listen further or to be helpful to the teller. These same fears, according to Agnes Whistling Elk, may function as psychic-physical triggers of predatory action against her.

Medicine Eagle (1988), in her discussion of the Lakota ways, writes,

What one of my southern lineages refers to simply as "the belly" is the mysterious point within the geography of the human body and within the Spirit. This lies in the body one or two finger-widths below the navel. This is the home base for an integrated walk in everyday life and for the unfolding of the mysterious power of the will. (1988, p. 211)

Shamans, in American Indian cultures, understand that transformation is part of finding personal power and that the journey to claiming personal power is an internal one. It is a journey of the Spirit within (p. 210).

As we turn attention now to cultural stories of rape, the reader is urged to shield her or his soft-shell person as we seek our way through the following "maze, a man-made set of tracks/traps leading nowhere which masks/hides the true Labyrinthine path, . . ." in search of the "Labyrinth," which is both the "true pathway of the Metapatriarchal Journey of Exorcism and Ecstasy, . . ." as well as "an Elemental capacity for Hearing the way into the Otherworld" (Daly, 1987, pp. 211, 142). By means of such Otherworld Journeys, it is hoped we Voyagers will dispel patriarchal demons and reach the Realm of Metamorphosis (1987, p. 87).

#### A Theory of Stories and A Story of Theories

Theories are elaborate stories which we humans build to explain the world to ourselves and to others. These stories are based upon our human capacity to make observations about the world and its matrices of relationality. From our random observations, we begin to seek or to create order. At times, our human

stories are in narrative form with a recognizable plot and characters. In this form there are genres of stories, for example, American Gothic novels. At other times human stories become abstractions known as theories, for example, Oedipal theories about the developmental processes of children. At still other times, they are in disarray and barely recognizable as stories at all as in, for example, the sometimes incoherent first-telling of sexual violence stories by survivors.

In theory building we begin to make planned, selected observations. From each of our observations we gather information. Gradually we create theory-stories in an attempt to make sense of the world. In our sense-making efforts, we sometimes create simple and sometimes elaborate explanations. In other words, we tell stories to ourselves about our observations. By this process we construct a dialogue with our personal observations and develop additional questions for making more observations. We share and trade stories and our questions with others. We construct theories. Of the narrative process of story-telling among people of her tribe, A. Cameron comments,

It is the custom of the People that when a story has been told to you, you give the teller something of equal value; a story of your own. And so it often is, the storytellers meet and first one will tell a wonderful tale, and another

will share with a second wonderful tale. The first will be so moved by the story of the second that she will offer a third wonderful tale, and on hearing the third tale, the second teller will be so moved she will offer a fourth tale. (1986, p. 1)

A good theory, like a good story, is interesting to both the listener and the teller and it stimulates more theory telling. The benefit of a theory lies not in its absolute accuracy or truthfulness, but rather in its ability to stimulate research and study. Interesting theories do not need to tell the whole truth, nor much truth at all, they need only to intimate that fascinating truths are contained within.\* The more compelling a theory to its creator and its listeners, the more likely it is that the theory-builder or others may claim absolute truthfulness for it. That which emerged out of observations and questions about observations, is credited with absoluteness and universality. In their claims for absolute truthfulness, theories, just like political empires, can be oriented towards imperialism and dominance. In other words, they may seek to contain and to overpower others' stories, others' theories.

Once a theory claims full truthfulness, its developers and its users may forget that a theory may only claim partial truthfulness. Theory tellers and listeners may forget that the theory is culturebound

and can only reflect the selective observing and seeing which is encouraged, or allowed, by the culture of its origin. All theories, therefore, are constructed within socio-historical contexts. A good absorbing theory, most apt to be intellectually satisfying to large numbers of people, reflects closely the culture within which it was born. It replaces outworn, stale metaphors with fresh ones. It gathers up, in new grammars, the undergirding beliefs and values of a culture and re-presents them. Because of the closeness of observation and reflection to common understandings, theory has the potential not only to reveal that which culturally is but also to re-enter the culture as a creator of that which will be. Thus, satisfying theories often function bimodally; they describe what has already been observed and they create future realities. In a certain sense they serve as a bridge from past to future.

No part of theory construction is free from moments of interaction with cultural constraints. Because of the complex interrelatedness of culture and theory, presuppositions may be hidden and nonaccessible. Often only a changing historical context opens the possibility of recognizing the extent

to which the cultureboundness of these previously hidden assumptions limits a theory's claim to truthfulness, universality and absoluteness.

Interesting theories describe observed realities and hypotheses in language understood by both creators and users. Because any one language or sign system has limited powers of revelation, theories absorb the predominant ideology or ideologies of the language or sign system. These ideologies, in hidden ways, also serve as limitations upon absolute truthfulness because they are likewise not visible. Because of the complex interrelatedness of language, culture, and ideology, underlying assumptions may remain hidden motivators of a theory's power. In addition, the hidden ideologies of language also function as powerful shapers of consciousness itself. For example, in English there are two separate realities implied by the words history and story. However, in Spanish, there is one word with its feminine signifier, la historia, which conveys a double meaning of story and history. One needs to know the context of conversation to know which meaning is in a predominant role and which meaning, in a secondary role, thus carries the more obscure signification. Both remain active as signifiers of meaning. Yet one takes contextual precedence.

As theories emerge from and then once again re-enter a cultural context as descriptors and creators of cultural reality, they can assume yet another, perhaps more powerful function. They become part of a culture's definition of truth itself. Now the theory (the story explaining observations) gains a prescriptive function. It is used to define what is desired. When claimed as part of truth itself, human powers of sense-making by description, creativity, and prescription can go on to claim powers of proscription as well. The empirical norm, that which has been observed, now becomes the authoritative norm, that which should be. This process of norm setting often is also used to establish that which should not be. Thus, a boundary to observation and to knowing is established. Once this boundary is firmly in place, it frequently becomes invisible, maintained only by its privileged place in consciousness, in the place of natural truth.

Frequently the changes from description to prescription and from prescription to proscription contain sociopolitical realities. Those who become the master storytellers are often interested in creating, holding, or transmitting power. The silencing of other's stories, those stories which describe

other observations and other realities, becomes part of the garnering of power by the dominating and controlling authorities.

When the voices of the dissenters, the powerless, the ignored, or the disinherited are silenced, their wisdom is lost. Those who are most estranged within any given culture are those who most rapidly lose the privilege of including their voices and stories in creating culture's story, its history. By the active or passive denial of these now-silenced-stories, the master theory builders construct incomplete and, at times, false stories. Thus, the poet A. Rich reminds us that it is the historian who creates the story of history (1986). Those whose story is not included in that history become invisible to the dominant storytellers. Invisible, they seem to be without history, story, and voice. If the powerless introject a belief in their own status of having no story, they lose their ability to see and understand their own past and present. Storyless, they are unable to imagine their future. Disempowered by the initial devaluation and loss of their story, they now are doubly disempowered by their own disbelief in the power of a storied future for themselves.



### The Story of Rape

What needs to gain clarity for us in the dominant stories or theories about rape is how often the voices of the victims of rape are silenced or unheard. The observable phenomena of rape can be described statistically; yet these statistics, at best, are crude estimates. Reliable statistics are not available. The story of rape is predominantly a woman's story; yet until the 1970s it has been a story predominantly told by men. Of the storytelling tradition in her culture, Cameron comments,

It is the custom of the People that when a story has been told it belongs to the one who told it, not the one or ones who heard it. Nobody would tell a story not given to her, the sin of it is too great, the shame of it too enormous." (1986, p. 2)

Stories told without permission become stolen lies. Psychologist M. Koss reminds us that men have a story about rape and women have a story about rape and these are not necessarily the same story (1988a; 1988b). Yet, at times, only men's theories or stories have been culturally available on the topic of rape's presence in the relationships of men and women. Women's stories about the same topic have been

discounted. In many circumstances men's stories about rape are then assumed to be the woman victim's story as well.

Nevertheless, women from the early 1970s until the present, have begun to tell their own stories of rape, their own theories of rape's presence in their lives. Their story of rape, rather than being a tale of seduction, devious desire, and collusion, is one of helplessness, powerlessness and intimidation. The telling of rape's story by women does not reveal passive, submissive, masochistic desire but rather terrified obedience to coercive force and violence. The woman's story is not one of happy, fulfilled completion after rape nor of devoted love for him who has assaulted and subjugated her. It is, instead, one of murderous rage, despair, and pervasive mistrust. While experienced generally one by one, rape's presence in women's stories is not totally privatized; it is experienced by a multitude of women. Nevertheless, while millions of women have experienced sexual violence, each woman survivor also tells a particular and personal accounting of her own story.

This dissertation examines culture-based stories about rape. Women's rape stories, seen previously through male-dominated ideologies of woman's nature or her sexuality, are beginning to shatter cultural

beliefs about rape. As these now fractured belief stories are themselves re-examined, women say that not only is rape itself destructive to women but that men's theories about rape have also been destructive. Women's new insistence upon telling, in public narratives and discourse, the previously private stories of sexual violence in their lives, is creating a new language and a new metaphor system among women. In essence, a new consciousness is being forged. Women story tellers and their interpreters have begun to exegete a virulent hatred of women. This hatred manifests itself in misogynist ideologies about women. While initially women saw the content of misogynist theory as its most dangerous element, increasingly women are recognizing that the methodology and grammar of theory construction may contain equally or more dangerous misogynist messages as well.

Women, who want to reclaim women's stories about rape from women's wordlessness and the psychic reality of invisibility, are critically examining the contemporary worldview of the scientific method. Recognizing that both the study of method and the study of interpretation are essential scientific moments for contemporary women, feminist scholars (Christ, 1980; Plaskow, 1980) have become pre-occupied with women's story telling and story interpretation as revelatory to

women of a new reality, a reality in which they are present, vocal, valued and visible. In a variety of academic disciplines, women are reaching across disciplinary boundaries, and, at times, tearing down those artificial barriers to human knowing, in search of self-other understanding.

For example, neurophysiologist R. Bleier (1984) considers the relationship of science to gender beliefs. She combines her background as a natural scientist with theoretical conceptions of culture. She constructs a dialogue with theories from the natural sciences and from the socio-anthropological ones to ask questions about presuppositions contained within the idea of science itself. Science, with its "ethnocentric, androcentric, and universalistic world view" (p. 2) separates biology from culture. In that separation "women's efforts to do other than what they are destined to do--by biology and evolution, by nature and temperament--threaten the health and survival of the race" (p. 2). Yet, according to Bleier, it is not nature but culture which constrains the nearly limitless potential for behavioral flexibility provided to each human by her brain (p. viii).

Describing the theory of rape among sociobiologists, Bleier quotes D. Barash (1979), a sociobiologist whose work identifies plant rape as

actual rape and establishes the naturalness of rape in the biological world. When a plant's male pollen inseminates the female ovary through a pollen tube, Barash claims nature's prototype of rape is being enacted. He comments about this so-called naturalness and innocence of rape, "Plants that commit rape. . . are following evolutionary strategies that maximize their fitness" (Barash, 1979, p. 31).

For Barash, the naming of rape as a natural plant phenomenon allows him to extend his metaphor into a hypothesis about the naturalness of rape among humans. The limitless potential of male sperm and the limited potential of female eggs in human reproduction form his basic understanding of human rape. According to Barash, one male ejaculation of sperm could inseminate every woman in the United States. The woman's limited number of receptive eggs creates power imbalances between men and women; thus, the man with his millions of sperm reaps "investment rewards" by inseminating as many women as possible while the woman with her limited four hundred eggs reaps an "investment reward" by limiting insemination. Thus, the man goes for quantity while the woman seeks quality.

In addition, Barash quotes zoologist R. Danbers with approval. "The exploitation of women by men probably began very long ago, when the smaller, more

active sperm began to take advantage of the rich food reserves in the larger, less active egg" (Barash, p. 47). By this manner human behavior of rape is anthropomorphically attributed to plants and to gametes. Once such "rape" is seen as inevitable in the natural world of non-humans, it can be re-assigned to human behavior repertoires as part of humanity's evolution, an evolution shared paradigmatically with animals and plants. Once thus attributed, nature is assumed responsible for rape behavior among humans. Rape among humans is also innocent. It is motivated by genes seeking success in the transmission of genetic material into a new generation of genetic material. Bleier summarizes her concern with this type of science:

This face [official discourse] is the soft, subtle, intellectual control, which through the hysterization and medicalization of women's bodies and the psychiatrization of their minds taught women their need to be subservient to men. . . . The other face is the unofficial and sublegal one by which sex is used for the physical control of women-prostitution, pornography, rape, battering and sexual slavery-and it teaches that women want to be controlled, even violently. (Bleier, 1984, p. 182)

Rape, according to Bleier, is not about genetic reproduction. It is, instead, a violent and sexual expression of the cultural eroticization of gender differences in power; of the eroticization of male dominance and female submission. By means of this

eroticization of power, a type of consciousness is created within culture that links manhood and virility with mastery, appropriation and force. Rape and its commonness, as well as the omnipresent aggressive pornographic image or representation of rape, are the active cultural factors.

Bleier's work in biology teaches us that the underlying ideology of science itself as well as the ideologies of the scientist herself or himself are both important in understanding theories of human behavior. Scientific neutrality, the rigid separation of objectivity and subjectivity, is not possible. In addition, culture (the human milieu) and biology (the physical body) cannot be separated from one another by science in attempts to describe, explain and interpret human behavior.

### Methodology

The present study of rape in women's lives is grounded in a variety of sources. Primarily, it is grounded in my professional work as a teacher and as a clinician. Secondarily, it is grounded in some elements of my personal life.

Two relationships, occurring closely together in time, taught me how little I knew about sexual

violence. One relationship was with a casual acquaintance whose sexual assault happened years before I met her. To my eyes, she stayed intransigently wounded by an event of stranger rape. Even though after rape she had immediately entered therapy in an attempt to heal herself, her post-rape woundedness, in my opinion, continued negatively to affect all of her relationships.

The second relationship was a professional one with a bright, underachieving college undergraduate. For weeks after her initial contact with me, she appeared to be waiting for me to ask the magical question that would allow healing to occur. Then one day, after minutes of silence, she herself asked the critical question of me. She looked at me and requested, "Would you please help me tell my mother I've been raped?" She told a story of a post-high school graduation party date rape. On her way home from the party, where she had consumed some alcohol, her boyfriend raped her. He then drove her home as if nothing unusual had happened. She did not tell her mother nor anyone else. Only in her second semester of college did her impending academic failure alert faculty members that something was wrong. One of them



insisted that she see me for counseling and thus it was that she eventually trusted herself enough to confide her problem as she understood it.

### Terminology

Language usage in this dissertation conforms mostly to common, everyday usage. There are two exceptions to this rule: when I am quoting or directly using M. Daly's works I follow her spelling and capitalization practices; secondly, when I use technical terminology from any specialized vocabulary, I attempt immediately in the text to give an adequate definition.

### Research Questions

Awareness is growing in the community of therapists as well as within the community of women, that rape appears to scar a woman in permanent ways. The questions of women's healing after rape are difficult ones to formulate with precision. The anti-rape movement has roots in polemical and political dialogue about women's systemic oppression in patriarchal societies. Thus, its understandings about women's realities tend to be politicized and systemic.

For radical feminist theorists, consciousness-raising was seen as a way, or perhaps even the way, to a liberation of consciousness. On the other hand, the therapy disciplines have deep roots in medical models of diagnosis and treatment and a concomitant committedness to ideas of pathology and cure. Therapists most often believe potential for healing lies in the development of awareness of previously repressed memories and conflicts. Thus, therapy's questions tend to be privatized ones. Therapy is usually, although not always, oriented toward recovery of, or attainment of, some level of wellness.

With personal understandings of human consciousness shaped both by secular feminism and by psychodynamic therapies, my own underlying question about women for years has been: Why are so many women depressed? Three years of theological preparation refined my awareness to include a second question, an inverted image of the first: How can any woman not be depressed in patriarchal societies in which even the gods are male and dedicated to women's nearly subhuman status? I began the study process for this dissertation by asking two additional questions:

- (1) Why do women have trouble healing after an event of

rape? (2) What can we learn from the study of rape that will assist women in helping women create healing for themselves?

### Literature Limitations

Because the 1970s were such turbulent times for women, I began my search for answers in feminist literature from that period of time. It rapidly became apparent that the search needed to be a multi-disciplinary one. The time limitations of the literature search were arbitrarily set from 1970 until the present. Unless an earlier article appeared essential to the authors whose work I was reading, I have not included it. Eventually, I limited written materials to those with a direct relevance to questions of healing. In addition, some issues pertinent to women's healing were also excluded. For example, a woman's encounters with the criminal justice and legal systems may significantly affect her recovery. Other authors are exploring this area with more depth than is possible in this study. I have neither access to women in these systems nor do I have a thorough understanding of the machinations of the systems themselves.

The most poignant resources became the women who heard from someone who had heard it from someone else

that I was writing a paper about rape. Letters and notes began to arrive from people I thought I had known as close friends, as well as from total strangers. Students wrote journal entries and lengthy papers. In addition, would-be counselees began to appear at my door with regularity.

Eventually several men approached me also with the request for assistance in talking about their own encounters with sexual violence. None of this private sharing is directly quoted in this dissertation. I had no permission to use another person's story in research. And by the time writing began, I was deeply influenced by Cameron's discussion of storytelling. Her insistence upon telling only the story given with permission to be shared is a reasonable limitation for all of us to remember.

However, I personally have been affected by all of this outpouring of women's pain and confusion. Young college-age women as well as old women have sought me out to learn how to "get over it." One of the most painful accounts to me personally was from an older relative of mine who told a childhood incest story for the first time at age eighty. Like the biblical Mary, I have pondered over these stories, seeking to understand them as teachings for my own life as a woman.

The presence of rape stories with faces on them has changed me in the process of research and writing. Rape's story has wounded my life and has become a story of strength as well. A friend who works daily with victims of sexual violence wrote to me of her personal life as a woman, "You know I have always been afraid of night and of rape. After these past couple of years, I am no longer terrified. I have looked rape in the face." A. Rich's poem about Madame Curie identifies this paradox of wounding and strength.

She died    a famous woman    denying  
her wounds  
denying  
her wounds    came    from the same source as her power

(Rich, 1984, p. 225)

### Assumptions and Limitations

I am aware of several assumptions which are present in this dissertation. The first is a belief that women's writings can form the theoretical basis for scholarly work. The second is that women's theorizing about their lives is important. The third is that spiritual revelation continues to go on in women's lives, no matter what religious traditions claim about closed or privileged revelation. The fourth is that women can create healing relationships

for each other, even in situations that threaten either the selves of the women or their relationship with each other.

Unlike C. Christ, however, who writes that women's stories have not been told (1980, p. 1), I have come to believe strongly that they have not been heard. There is a common saying among several of my friends that when the student is ready, the teacher will emerge. In studying rape, I have come to believe that when a listener is ready to hear, the story will emerge.

A recent book by Australian feminist D. Spender (1982) provides support for my view of this. She has reviewed selected women's writings from Aphra Behn (CE 1640-1680) to the contemporary poet Adrienne Rich. She finds multiple repetitions of women's' concerns and visions in the stories and words of historical women. However, the silencing of women's voices by the choices of historians in writing history causes them to be unknown. Repeatedly, Spender traces a particular idea in women's words and finds that each succeeding generation of women authors believe they are beginning a new story, a new analysis of women's' condition. My sense of Spender's book is that each of these once told stories of women is lost because the respectful listening ear or seeing eye is lost. Each generation of rebellious women has lost contact with the

foremothers who preceded them. It becomes impossible for women to build upon the intellectual life of previous generations of women when their work is destroyed, lost, or hidden.

I accept the feminist premise that women's silence is an enforced silence of patriarchal dominance (Christ, 1980; Griffin, 1981; Olson, 1978; Plaskow, 1980; Rich, 1979b; Spender, 1982). In addition, at least in the area of sexual violence, it is also a woman's response to her perceptions about the inability of listeners to hear her story with care, compassion, and competency.

Technically, there are other assumptions. Therapy is a process of telling and receiving stories. Therapy is based upon a learned process of hermeneutics. Therapists are, or should be, experts in listening to and hearing what is unsaid as well as what is said. Therapy is more about the discovery or creation of meaning than it is about uncovering truth. Therapy is a process in which people learn to reframe the stories which have given or now give shape to their lives. Therapy, by its nature as an interpersonal process, involves the therapist's self as well as the client's self.

Healing arises within the wounded individual; it can never be given to her, but only claimed. Therapy

is a process of giving the self permission to heal. Therapy involves recognition of the crucial internalized myths which give meaning and those which destroy meaning. For example, if a woman has always guided her life by the myth of Prince Charming who will rescue her from all dangers, marital rape will have one meaning. If, on the other hand, her own mythic understanding is that no man, even a spouse, can ever be trusted, it will have another. In addition, therapy involves making a close reading of the metaphors which guide the person's understanding of rape. If, for example, a woman's metaphors for rape include phrases such as the "ultimate violation," her need to reframe her self-identity and her assumptive world (Janoff-Bulman and Frieze, 1983) after rape will take one direction. If, however, on the other hand, she understands rape as "normal intercourse," it will take another.

Finally, I believe that all healing is both personal and systemic. V. Satir, the gifted family systems therapist, would often demonstrate the systemic nature of pathology in family systems by visual metaphors. She would tie volunteer demonstration subjects together, or tie them to members of the audience, or even to furniture. As one person untied herself (often climbing under chairs or over tables in



the process) from this artificially constructed web of string, the web itself changed character. Often a second person or a third was also freed. In addition, Satir constructed living family sculptures by recruiting volunteers to play each family member. When one person in the sculpture changed a posture or position within the living sculpture, the sculpture as a whole changed. Family systems analysis claims, and I accept the claim, that when any part of a system changes, all parts of the system will change.

Therapy, at its best, claims no more than this. As an individual decides to make, and then makes, personal changes in her life, all of the systems which surround her must adapt.

### Conceptual Framework

Recognizing that rape is a cultural event as well as a personal experience, I have attempted to utilize the methodological work of C. Geertz as one organizing principle for study. His phrase "thick description," about ethnographic research attempts to characterize, in Geertz's metaphor, the process of differentiating between "a twitch and a wink" (Geertz, 1973, p. 6). This differentiation occurs with contextualization. Contextualization of a gesture, a ritual or a social

form examines what a film plate cannot do; it establishes whether the facial contortion was a twitch or a wink. Of necessity, this becomes a hermeneutical endeavor on the part of the researcher.

The anthropologist in making such differentiations must sort out a "confusion of tongues." For Geertz, "culture is public because meaning is" (pp. 12-13). It is not a private psychic reality which remains hidden. The specific behaviors, which the anthropologist examines, belong to the world of behavior. "The thing to ask is what their impact is: what it is, . . . that in their occurrence and through their agency, is getting said" (p. 10). The anthropologist seeks to understand the imaginative universe within which acts become signs to meaning. Anthropological interpretation is constructing a reading of what happens; that reading cannot be divorced from thick descriptions of what happens (p. 18).

Theory is not predictive in thick description, but descriptive. "The essential task of theory building here is not to codify abstract regularities but to make thick description possible, not to generalize across cases but to generalize within them" (p. 26). What is sought is not the reification of a theory of culture,

but conversation, the enlargement of the "universe of human discourse" (p. 14). Of his methodological approach, Geertz remarks:

Although one starts any effort at "thick description," beyond the obvious and superficial, from a state of general bewilderment as to what the devil is going on-trying to find one's feet-one does not start (or ought not) intellectually empty-handed. Theoretical ideas are not created wholly anew in each study; as I have said, they are adapted from each other, related studies, and, refined in the process, applied to new interpretive problems. (p. 27)

In addition, the aim of thick description is to draw conclusions from "small, but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics" (p. 28).

Rather than doing ethnographic field work in some island somewhere among people called natives, I have chosen to look at theories of rape as the raw data to be examined. I have attempted to thickly describe what various subsystems of our predominantly Western Euro-American culture say about rape. In an attempt to do a "reading" on rape as a cultural form, I have looked at a tightly woven web of data and opinion in order to ask What is being said? What about the meaning of rape, as this culture defines it, prevents women from understanding the occurrence of rape in their lives; what prevents them from creating healing for themselves?

What prevents them from making sense of their experience? What continues as the internal space in which fear resides, the home of rape's power in cultural and personal life?

### Note

#### Section One

\*Appreciation is expressed to Philip Dreyer, Professor of Education, Claremont Graduate School, for his lectures on the purposes of theory building. While I am not quoting directly from him, I have built upon his classroom presentations. He is obviously not responsible for the utilization of his ideas in these pages.

## Chapter 1

### The Anti-rape Movement: Women Changing Consciousness

1971. For me a year of rages. We rose like a chorus of Erinyes. The furies. All that had been held back, the stories we never told; what we did not see or refused to recognize. And none of us alone in this. Now any woman, a neighbor, one's blood relatives, strangers had become allies, part of an unspoken network of thought. A whole new connective tissue began to grow between each of us and the women around us and a past we now claimed as our own and the lives of our daughters, or girls unborn which we wanted to imagine as different from our own, unscarred, not damaged by the list of atrocities we could suddenly now name.

Susan Griffin

Rape: The Power of Consciousness

### Introduction

Today's societal awareness of rape as a complex personal and sociocultural issue has been greatly informed in the United States by feminist debate. The anti-rape movement began among feminist, often leftist, sometimes Marxist, women. Many of these women had been active in the black civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. It was during a Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee meeting in Mississippi in 1964 that the actual phrase, "women's liberation," was

coined by women as they discussed their own roles within the ongoing black liberation movement (Sarachild, 1978b, p. 17).

Awareness of rape as a women's issue surfaced early within the second wave of feminism. (Winning of the right to vote for women concluded the first wave in the 1920s.) In the United States the women's liberation movement developed women's consciousness-raising groups. Women in their conversations began to talk about sexual violence as it affected themselves and other women whom they knew.

#### Consciousness-raising:

#### Methodology of Awareness and Change

The Redstockings, a group of radical feminist women, promoted consciousness-raising as one way in which women could learn a new consciousness. K. Sarachild (1978a) describes initial use of the term during a women's group meeting in New York. Utilizing the definition of radical as that which goes to the root of the problem, Sarachild relates that this group wanted women's liberation groups in order to start a mass movement of radicalized women. Purposes for such a mass movement of women were defined as ending the

barriers of sexual segregation and discrimination (p. 144). About the initial theory of consciousness-raising she writes:

Consciousness-raising--studying the whole gamut of women's lives, starting with the full reality of one's own--would also be a way of keeping the movement radical by preventing it from getting sidetracked into single issue reforms and single issue organizing. It would be a way of carrying theory about women further than it had ever been carried before, as the groundwork for achieving a radical solution for women as yet attained nowhere. (p. 145)

The Redstockings related their own understanding of consciousness-raising to the new consciousness described in S. de Beauvoir's book, The Second Sex (1953). Acceptance of de Beauvoir's theories of patriarchal societies and of male supremacy underlie the Redstocking's development of embodied radical feminism. Among these radicalized feminist women the necessary consciousness was one which recognized the pervasive impact of male dominance and male supremacy upon feminine consciousness as well as within patriarchal social structures. Identifying the destructive presence of male supremacy in women's lives became the central task of feminist analysis within groups led by members of the Redstockings.

Consciousness-raising groups formed an environment in which women began to create a radical feminist analysis of socio-cultural and personal realities in



women's lives. The formation of supportive women's groups provided a safe, non-judgmental environment in which women could freely explore the impact of patriarchal male supremacy within their individual lives. In addition, consciousness-raising groups also examined common political aspects of women's social realities. Analysis began not from the vantage point of expert opinion but from multiple vantage points within women's experience.

Feminist ideology that the personal is political was born within the theory and practice of consciousness-raising. Women, as they met regularly with women, began to discover linkages of their private life experiences with systemic political realities. Women began to discover that they were not alone; that they were not unique or weird; and that they were not crazy. As they together considered what happened to them in daily life, they began to comprehend that they shared these private and personal realities with other women. They began to identify and analyze cultural systems which oppressed them. The intersection in their lives of that which was private or personal with that which was shared and cultural began to be examined and evaluated from the position of newly discovered perspectives. Women began to become aware of the realities of their lives within oppressive socio-

cultural and political systems. S. Griffin (1979) writes about that time of learning to see and hear as a time during which women "went to the sorest wounds" (p. 27).

Hence a body of listeners and seers became, as part of our movement, an institution. We created rape protection centers. Women sat and listened as another woman who had just been raped told her story. She was heard. And this was healing of a festering wound, even to those of us who had never been raped, because such is the nature of a community or a movement. We all suffer what the others do in our minds. (p. 27)

The starting point of consciousness-raising discussions was a woman's own personal experience with an issue or topic in her own life. As she shared her experience in the context of a women's group, other women assisted her. Together they began to do depth analysis of private experience in a shared environment. Feminist theologian N. Morton (1985) describes this process: "A new kind of seeing and hearing was beginning to be experienced by one group of women after the other. Once they recognized in themselves a common oppression, they could hear from one another that which many, more astute and intellectual than they, could not hear" (p. 17).

Gradually women learned to filter expert opinions about women's development and their lives through the experiential grid of women's actual experience and knowing. Gradually they learned to distrust expertise

about women when it was not grounded within actual stories of women. Sarachild recalls, "One of the questions . . . we would bring at all times to our studies would be--who and what has an interest in maintaining the oppression of our lives" (1978a, p. 145).

Consciousness-raising, as envisioned by the Redstockings, was not friendship, therapy or personal skill development. Rather, the aims of consciousness-raising were to use personal experience as the beginning place for theory construction about the lives of women and as the control factor for understanding and critiquing others' theories. Consciousness-raising groups provided women with a place to test theories for social activism and to support direct political action aimed at ending male supremacy.

The construct of consciousness-raising implicitly implies the presence within women of a defective, false, or unknown consciousness, an unknown and unrecognized awareness about the content and contexts of their individual lives. Of this A. Forer (1978) writes, "In this instance it is women who feel that their consciousness (which must be their awareness and perception regarding themselves and the world) has been

cramped, darkened, frustrated, undeveloped, misguided or even seemingly replaced by a false consciousness" (p. 151).

Women, writing much later about the consciousness-raising process, identified the issue of trust between women as one of the most critical issues. It was not so much that trust developed within women's groups which then allowed the story of private lives to emerge. Rather, trust developed among women through the process of telling stories about their most personal and private experiences as women. Of this reality, Morton (1985) writes, "Trust came because they were heard" (p. 17). An anonymous woman (1978) writes about an early group meeting in which women talked about sexual desire and sexual behavior:

The excitement from this meeting carried over and the women who hadn't been at the meeting of course wanted to talk about their experiences with sex...and the truth about sex for them. The subject of sex was opened up and women could tell the truth about themselves sexually for the first time. (p. 142)

The women who developed early methods and theories of consciousness-raising envisioned the aims of women's discussion in several ways. Insistence upon hearing every woman in her turn was designed to assist the total group of women "get closer to the truth" (Sarachild, 1978a, p. 148). Getting the experiences of as many women as possible in the common "knowledge

pool" was helpful in doing analysis of women's social situation of oppression and victimization.

Sarachild states emphatically that consciousness-raising was not designed to develop leadership skills, nor to develop the abilities of speaking and listening, nor to do therapy and change women. Rather, its purpose was to discover, understand, and challenge male supremacy. The dual purposes of understanding and change imply active involvement of women in discussion and analysis. Sarachild and other early theorists believed that finding solutions to problems of male supremacy involved naming one's own experiences, obtaining additional insights from other women and their experiences, systematic analysis, and taking action. "Finding the solution to a problem takes place through theory and action both. Each leads to the other but both are necessary or the problem is never really solved" (Sarachild, 1978a, p. 148).

The problem, according to the Redstockings women, these earliest originators of consciousness-raising, is not that women are psychologically damaged and need help to become complete, whole, well adjusted individuals. Rather, the problems women face are located in women's external reality. With adequate descriptions of their realities, women can begin to name the impact of male supremacy upon and within their

own personal lives. They learn they are not alone. By mutual analysis of individual problems, (problems now identified as shared problems), women become empowered for action. Movement begins toward changes in the women's life environments. Neither theory development nor action alone is sufficient. Women need theory to understand and empowerment to act. Once understanding clicks into place, new realities can be dreamed. Once a vision occurs of a new reality, then work can bring it into being. S. Griffin illustrates this perception among feminist women when she writes:

For the issue of rape was in no way ever separate from the question of the whole liberation of women as we had been defined by patriarchy, and we did not see it as separate. To begin with, for us to begin to protest against rape we had to see there was such a thing as patriarchy, and once seeing patriarchy, other conditions became visible to us, and other lies about these conditions. . . . We knew that a world without rape would be one in which we were seen for what we are, and we would grow as large in our powers as we were able.

And when I ask how did we come to envision a world without rape, I am asking about the shape of revolutions because when one dreams of a new world, this world immediately becomes possible. (1979, p. 25)

To begin to see the world anew and to hear a new reality, even in one's own dreams for healing and wholeness, is to begin to participate in the creation of a new world. Women who listened to other women within the context of the rising consciousness among

women saw new images luring them and heard new voices calling them. Two women spoke early of the spiritual dimensions of this hearing and seeing.

Morton's book (1985), written at the end of her life after a career of teaching and church service, points the reader beyond women's agony of speaking to a new hearing. Recognizing "the ear that was there before the sound was uttered" (p. 17), Morton claims that women came to new speech because they were being heard. By hearing, women received one another as well as the words they were speaking and a new form of grace entered women's lives. Women experienced this grace as a healing presence within their spirits and as a liberating power for their lives. Morton's preferred use of the phrase "woman movement" represents her attempt to open up new ways of perceiving. She states:

[To] use woman as a modifier . . . opens up a whole, moving, and pervasive way of perceiving--an emerging, accelerating, enlarging, powerful, growing potential that cannot be contained by the use of the possessive "woman's." . . . I imply something in constant ferment. It would include those who are not aware, or not yet aware of being aware. In using this term there is no pigeonholing or labeling or categorizing of self or another as "radical feminist," a "real feminist," or a "militant feminist." (p. xxix)

Claiming Morton's metaphor of the "great ear of the universe" (Morton, 1985, pp. 11-30) hearing human beings to speech and a new creation, Griffin (1979) cries out that going to the core of women's pain in

rape has drawn her to spiritual realities, realities previously denied. She raises a theological question. She asks of herself, and of her women readers, whether a woman who perceives the Goddess in herself participates in a new kind of knowing. This knowing protects her from shame and allows her to see her own essentialness, her own humanity in new ways. Having once realized her own true humanity, the woman begins to work and to see in new ways. "We see what is not there. We see visions. We know there is [emphasis hers] a world without rape and this world is in our minds" (Griffin, 1979, p. 43).

#### Consciousness-raising and Awareness of Rape

Prior to 1970, much professional literature about rape, either in criminology or in the clinical sciences, assumed that rape was a rare happenstance. M. E. Wolfgang wrote that "rape is a relatively infrequent phenomenon" (Amir, 1971, p. vii). By this Wolfgang meant the then current FBI statistics of one rape in the United States "every seventeen minutes" (p.vii). In addition, criminologists and clinicians held women responsible for rape. M. Amir's (1967, 1971) work reflected that bias in his studies of the



sociology of rape. As part of his data analysis, Amir comments about the reciprocal relationship of criminals and victims:

In a way the victim is always the cause of the crime; every crime needs a victim or his extension-that is, something which belongs to him. The general model of the victim's role in crime is that of the passive, weak and vulnerable opposing the doer. The victim is seen as one prospective subject among other alternatives, and some of her characteristics, and situational opportune elements made the offender drawn to her, or he may seek her particularly because of special motives, or she seems to offer the least resistance. In this victim-doer model . . .the offender is the acting-out agent and the question is why the particular victim was chosen. (1971, p. 259)

Amir's preferred model for describing the crime of rape however, is known as victim precipitation. He questioned the absolute guilt of rapists by considering the victim to be at least partially responsible for the rape event in her life. While the victim may not be "solely responsible" for the rape event, she is a "complementary partner" and rape is not a "genuinely random affair" (1971, p. 260). For Amir, the differences between victim vulnerability, negligibility, recklessness, provocativeness, and seductiveness are unclear ones in the case of rape (p. 260). It is the victim who initiates the crime against herself. The behavior of the rapist is triggered by his "(mis)interpretation" of her signals of sexual accessibility to him (p. 261). The victim's

situational environment and her behavior (acts of commission) or its absence (passive acts of omission) leads the rapist to believe she is inviting sexual relationships or that she at least is not refusing them.

The concept of victim precipitation (VP) rests on another model: victim-doer-victim. Here, the victim is the one who is acting out, initiating the inter-action between her and the offender, and by her behavior she generates the potentiality for criminal behavior of the offender or triggers this potentiality, if it existed before in him. Her behavior transforms him into a doer by directing his criminal intentions which not only lead to the offense but also may shape its form. (p. 259)

Many articles in the medical press dealt with the woman's responsibility for her sexual assault and with carefulness in establishing a diagnosis of rape. Physicians dealt with rape as if it were their task to establish guilt or innocence of the victims. Even though determination of rape's occurrence is a legal responsibility, physicians assumed they needed to make a decision about whether or not rape had occurred. Medical literature from this period is filled with terminology such as "alleged rape". Physicians and other health practitioners were warned to be careful about believing the stories of women who claimed to be rape victims.

Criminal justice systems also responded to women's reports of rape events with skepticism. Many criminal

justice system articles were written from the vantage point of protecting the alleged rapist from improper prosecution.

As women met together in consciousness-raising groups to discuss the impact of male supremacy upon their personal lives and relationships, they identified and analyzed problems of being female in patriarchal, male supremicist societies. As part of their personal sharing, women talked about their own sexuality. They told previously untold stories about events of sexual violence in their personal encounters with men. From a woman's perspective, rape was not an invitation to sexual intercourse. Rather it was an act of violence committed against her. Women rejected the victim precipitation model proposed by Amir. Within consciousness-raising groups women were believed and did not need to defend their stories. Of this process, M. A. Largen (1985) writes:

Consciousness raising, or CR groups as they were commonly called, were a major new organizing tool of the women's rights movement in the late 1960's and involved informal groups of women discussing the problems of being female in modern society. Frequently viewed by the public as hotbeds of radical feminism, the reality was that simply attending such a discussion group was the most assertive act many women of that day were capable of taking. Nevertheless, the issues emerging from the meetings were far more volatile than those of equal employment and education. Within the intimate and supportive environment of the CR

groups, women found the courage to share private experiences they had never shared before, such as childhood incest and adolescent and adult rapes. (p. 2)

Through the telling of stories about personal encounters with sexual violence, these early women courageously broke taboos that had functioned to enforce the victim's silence about her own victimization from an incident or incidents of sexual coercion. It was this earliest consciousness-raising activity within groups of women that shattered the need for silence, the need to avoid either the telling or the hearing of women's stories about the sexual assaults they had experienced. Later, S. Brownmiller (1975), building upon these early stories, researched a cultural history of rape, written from a woman's perspective. The shift toward seeing rape as a crime of violence rather than as a crime of sexual passion was begun in this early period of the feminist anti-rape movement.

Brownmiller's book developed a feminist analysis of rape as it has been written about in male history and culture. Grounded in feminist ideology, the primacy of her work in breaking intellectual silence about the topic of rape has been widely acknowledged. Whether or not one agrees with her analysis (and it has received severe criticism in the African-American

community), her analysis must be considered foundational to contemporary feminist women's writings about rape. Rape for Brownmiller is a primary, structural male act of violence against women. It is enacted in patriarchal societies. It is taught to men as part of their socialization for male roles. By means of this socialization process, men are taught about men's prerogatives in power relationships with women. Brownmiller, in a stunning chapter about rape and warfare, identifies a central ideology of warfare as one in which women as men's property become booty which "rightfully" now belongs to the conquering warrior (Brownmiller, 1975, pp. 23-118).

#### The Politicization of Rape and Legal Reforms

New York Radical Feminists, a group of women from New York City, sponsored the first public Speak Out On Rape in 1971 at St. Clement's Episcopal Church in Manhattan. Of this event, Largent (1985) comments that 300 or more people attended and that much media coverage was provided. Women who recounted their own sexual violence stories broke into the public silence about rape and began to shatter popular misconceptions about rape. Some of these misconceptions were: (1) only evil or bad women could be raped; (2) all women

secretly long to be raped; (3) it is impossible to rape a woman who really does not desire coitus; (4) rape is primarily a spur of the moment sexual act done to women by strangers; and (5) women ask for rape.

They chose a media oriented forum rather than a courtroom, emergency room, or psychiatric clinic. By directing attention to personal stories of encounters with rape and sexual assaults, they also directed attention to rape as a sociopolitical reality for women. They shattered the taboo of talking about rape in political conversation. They began to reveal the horror of rape for women caught first within an event of violence and then within the events which followed the rape. Naming the violence done against women in the actual rape and naming the violence done against women in their encounters with medicine, criminal justice systems, and with other sociocultural systems, these women initiated two decades of political struggle by women against rape. In this struggle women have begun to search for different understandings of rape's presence in women's lives.

The anti-rape movement, beginning with consciousness-raising, initially focused much attention on the criminal justice system. Calling the survivor's encounters within this system a second assault, the anti-rape movement challenged public misconceptions

about rape as these were evidenced by police, prosecuting or defense attorneys, judges, and juries. Vigorous criticism was mounted against the low apprehension rate and the even lower conviction rates of rapists and other sexual criminals. Critics claimed that the criminal justice system really judged the victim of rape rather than the rapist.

By 1973, the National Organization of Women (NOW) National Task Force on Rape was established by its House of Delegates (Largen, pp. 9-11). NOW, soon after, published its proposals for criminal code reform in cases of rape and sexual assault. Of this work, Largen later comments, "The wave of criminal code reform begun in 1973 resulted in the achievement of major criminal statute changes in fifty states by the end of the decade" (p. 10).

Within the anti-rape movement, insistence upon legal reform became, for many women, their primary activity. Michigan, in 1974, became the first state to totally reform its law code for sexual assaults. Michigan's comprehensive reform focused on three major issues: definition of the crime itself with gradations of criminal culpability for the convicted rapist; penalty structures that reflected those gradations; and revision of the evidentiary rules of corroboration. Of the Michigan law, W. Loh states, "The new rape law

symbolizes and reinforces newly emerging conceptions about the status of women and the right of self-determination in sexual conduct" (Loh, 1981, p. 50). By 1981, twelve additional states had followed Michigan in making sweeping reforms of their criminal codes (p. 50).

The federal government responded to political pressures and, in 1975, established the National Center for the Prevention and Control of Rape under the auspices of the National Institutes of Health (Lystad, 1985, p. 14). Functions of this national center included support of research in the following areas: the causes of rape and sexual violence, mental health consequences of sexual violence, treatment strategies for victims and offenders, and effectiveness of preventive programs. In reviewing the published research portfolio of this national center, it is clear that much of the social science research in rape studies was accomplished only by the availability of this now defunct program of federal funding. The termination of funding in 1985 clearly limits further gains in research about rape (Herman, 1987).

Another early locus of political activity developed within the earliest rape crisis centers. On the West coast, radical feminist women in the Berkeley Women's Health Collective formed a small committee to



study ways in which women could fight rape. This group gave birth to Bay Area Women Against Rape (BAWAR), which founded the first rape crisis center in early 1972 (Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983; Herman, 1987). Largen reports that by 1980, 400 rape crisis centers existed in the United States (Largen, 1985, p. 5). By 1983, Time reported there were more than 700 rape crisis centers in the United States (Dowd, 1983, p. 27).

Largen (1985) states that many of the initial centers were staffed by former rape victims, by friends of rape victims and by radical feminist volunteers. Volunteers in these first centers reflected multi-ethnicity and a pluralism of life experiences. The unity of volunteers was focused on their commitment to women who had been raped and who now needed help. All members of these early centers were committed to victim assistance and, consequently, most became committed to political activism. The personal and the political again merged.

However, as the numbers of the centers grew, many became nearly white in their ethnic identity. Many centers now have predominantly white volunteers and counselors. Concerns continue to exist about multi-ethnic and multi-racial populations and their utilization or non-utilization of rape crisis centers.

While minority women appear to sustain a higher incidence of rape (Amir, 1967, 1971) many centers report a predominance of white survivors among their clients.

Not only rape crisis centers were aware of the ethnic and minority issues present in rape. During 1972, the Law Enforcement Assistance Association (LEAA) worked in a contractual relationship with the United States Census Bureau to study crime victimization in 13 United States metropolitan areas. In each of these cities a probability sample of 10,000 households was selected and interviewed by United States Census Bureau personnel. In the mass of data generated by this sample of nearly one-quarter of a million persons, the reported rate of completed rape was two times greater among blacks and other minorities than among whites. An interesting second glance at the data reveals very little difference in the attempted but uncompleted rape rate between women of color and white women (Hindelang & Davis, 1976).

A. Davis, in a series of works (1976, 1977, 1978, 1983, 1985) describes the current prevalence of rape in the United States as a symptom that capitalism is dysfunctional to women. Although not all women in the anti-rape movement accept her political analysis of capitalist materialism, it is important to recognize

that she is one of the few African-American women who are writing about the virulence of rape for both black and white alike.

African-American women understand rape, according to Davis, as repression in which they have experienced both sexism and racism (1983, p. 174). She attributes the absence of black women from the anti-rape movement to the racism of white feminist activism and white feminist theory about rape. Aware of the historically racist ties of black woman's rape and black man's lynching, Davis is critical of white feminist analyses of rape. She especially criticizes S. Brownmiller (1975) and D. Russell (1975) as writing inflammatory, racist opinions about rape. She urges white feminist women to understand the linkages of their theory construction about rape with the omnipresent racist oppression of black women and men within the United States. Davis views white feminist theory about rape of black women as colluding with white racism in ways which discourage black women from using rape crisis centers and from shared black-white, anti-rape activism. In addition, Davis is less optimistic about rape reforms than are her white counterparts. As a black woman, she does not see the criminal justice system providing justice to either black victims or black victimizers.

G. Lerner (1972) in a documentary history of African-American life in America describes the presence of rape and lynching in the lives of black women and men. She presents her analysis of the rape of black women within a context of conquering. Raping women is a worldwide practice when an enemy is defeated. Rape expresses, according to Lerner, the ultimate contempt for a foe. Rape symbolizes black male helplessness in the face of white male domination. As such, it is similar to lynching. Both become functional symbols of terror for a community.

Lerner believes that rape of black women within the United States functions as a sociopolitical weapon of racial oppression. As such rape is part of the "reinforcing structure upholding a system of racial and economic exploitation" (p. 173).

The message of both Lerner and Davis is that, because of a racist society, black women face different issues after a rape event than do their white women counterparts. African-American women do not wish to separate their own emancipation as women from the racial emancipation of their people. Black women have the memory of working towards the survival of their race as well as towards personal survival as women. They know black people in the United States have survived against incredible odds--the odds of slavery

in which black men were not allowed to protect black women against white rape and the odds in which black women were not allowed to protect black men against lynching. In the middle of violent, racist, white oppression which was both sexual and other than sexual, black men and women kept alive a dream of freedom for themselves and for their community.

White women who are racist continue the oppression of black men and women. Black men who are sexist and who rape black women continue the oppression of black women. The black woman is in a situation of double jeopardy. With white women she can experience the continuing wounds of racism. With black men she can experience the wounds of sexual assault and violence. In addition, systemic racism and oppression function to make the black woman a disbeliever in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. She knows that this same system always carries within itself the potential to mistreat any black person, female or male. Black consciousness in America carries within itself a very different reality than does white consciousness. Consciousness-raising, therefore, has a different socio-economic and political valence among black women than it has among white women. The black woman knows that rape is both personal and political. She knows a racist society does not value her self-worth and her

humanity. Her absence from rape crisis centers is no coincidence. Rather, her absence carries a profoundly pessimistic message of pain and despair in the midst of her survival and strength.

Davis is not alone among American feminists in using Marxist theory to discuss sexual violence. C. A. MacKinnon, faculty member at Stanford Law School, compares work and sexuality. Utilizing theoretical premises from Marxist thought and North American feminist theory, she writes:

I know of no nondegraded English verb for the activity of sexual expression that would allow a construction parallel to, for example, "I am working," a phrase that could apply to nearly any activity. This fact of language may reflect and contribute to the process of obscuring sexuality's pervasiveness in social life. Nor is there any [emphasis hers] active verb meaning to act sexually that specifically envisions a woman's action. If language constructs as well as expresses the social world, these words support heterosexual values. (1983, p. 229)

Feminism for MacKinnon is a theory of power and its unequal distribution. In MacKinnon's view of feminism, to be deprived of one's sexuality defines a loss of power (p. 228). She states:

Few women are in a position to refuse unwanted sexual initiatives. That consent rather than nonmutuality is the line between rape and intercourse further exposes the inequality in normal social expectations. So does the substantial amount of male force allowed in the focus on the woman's resistance, which tends to be disabled by socialization to passivity. If sex is ordinarily accepted as something men do to [emphasis hers] women, the better question would

be whether consent is a meaningful concept. Penetration (often by a penis) is also substantially more central to both the legal definition of rape and the male definition of sexual intercourse than it is to women's sexual violation or sexual pleasure. (p. 244)

MacKinnon believes women must come to realize that "Male power is a myth that makes itself true" (p. 254). The sexes are not equal. Feminist theory must grasp that "male power produces the world before it distorts it" (p. 254). Marxism's failure to deal satisfactorily with unequal gender relations needs feminist theory as a corrective.

Nevertheless, feminist women who accept capitalism and those who do not are agreed. Rape is a feminist issue.

#### Rape Crisis Centers and Post-rape Treatment of Women

J. Gornick, M. R. Burt, and K. Pittman (1985) surveyed rape crisis centers during the early part of the current decade. Utilizing a stratified, random sampling procedure, they asked the centers to provide them with information about their composition and activities. Certain common features were nearly universal: direct services to survivors, outreach programs to survivors, internal education programs, and public education programs.

Rejecting a rigid dichotomization of centers into feminist collectives or professionalized systems of health and social services, they identified a cluster of four types of services around which multiple models of service provision have arisen. Within the first cluster are direct emergency services (hotlines, victim advocacy within medical and criminal justice systems, referral, and provision of information to victims and others). Within the second cluster are crisis intervention services after the immediate crisis is over (short-term counselling, advocacy for the woman with medical, police or court system personnel). The third cluster is peer support (individual, couple or family counselling, follow-up). The final cluster is community activism and education (public education, police officer education, mental health worker education, legislative lobbying, demonstrations, rallies and boycotts).

In their article, the researchers acknowledge the anti-rape movement is not exclusively directed by nor controlled by feminist women. Two of the centers which they surveyed volunteered negative comments about feminism, for example, "This is not a feminist center."

Services to women after rape are centered primarily in four administrative structures: feminist, volunteer collectives; hospital based emergency rooms;



comprehensive community mental health centers or other psychiatric facilities; and social service programs in community agencies such as the YWCA. Each of these structures operates within an implicit value system of the nature of healing after rape.

Issues which faced the rape crisis centers in their beginnings continue as issues in the late 1980s. Many of the centers were, and still are, staffed by volunteers. The intensity of volunteer activity in rape center activity was, and is, reflected in the issue of volunteer turnover as burnout is experienced. In addition, many rape crisis centers were, and some still are, disapproved of by professional criminologists and by professional health care givers. The conflictual relationship of some crisis centers with police departments and emergency rooms creates tensions between volunteers and helping professionals.

Part of this conflictual relationship results from differing beliefs about proper responses to a woman immediately after rape. In the early anti-rape centers, volunteer counselling services were seen as assisting a woman through an externally triggered life crisis. Illness models for understanding the woman were rejected. Traditional health care models which respected the authority of predominantly male experts were also rejected. Health care models which

emphasized the power and authority of the health care giver over the power and authority of the health care recipient were especially rejected. Medicine and the psychotherapeutic disciplines were viewed as patriarchal and paternalistic, and, therefore, as both implicitly and explicitly harmful to women.

Crisis centers developed peer counselling techniques in which the woman was assisted to make her own decisions and to resume control of her life. Women who had survived rape were assured about the normalcy of their post-rape responses. Within the rape crisis center model of helping, the fact that the woman had survived a sexual assault was proof sufficient that she had done the best she could in a difficult, life-endangering situation. Even though others might view the woman's behaviors during a rape encounter as idiosyncratic and self-destructive, rape crisis centers rejected such judgments as after-the-fact criticism of a woman who had done what she could do and who had, in fact, survived.

The balance of power between professionals in the establishment (a phrase for the people in society who represent sanctioned control and authority) and the often radically alienated counter-culture, anti-rape movement activists is a shifting one. Crisis center volunteers, often victims themselves, work in

unlicensed agencies and provide free counselling to victims. Licensed health care emergency or crisis centers provide services which are legitimated by government but which charge fees.

The desirability of full acceptance of the anti-rape crisis model of counselling within the mainstream of American medicine and psychotherapeutic disciplines remains a highly debatable issue among women who name themselves as feminist. Many women, who see themselves as radical feminists and who, as women, want to change the vital life structures of the establishment, reject medical and psychotherapeutic values of post-rape therapy. Other women, who also see themselves as committed feminists, believe that mainstreaming and professionalizing post-rape services guarantees that any woman will receive qualified guidance and advice.

A related issue for feminist women who debate volunteer peer counselling over against professionalized therapy is that of diagnosis. Many rape crisis volunteers do not believe in the clinician's concept of diagnostic labeling. Urging that diagnostic processes and their concomitant labeling procedures be avoided, peer advisors see post-rape counselling as advising a normal, healthy woman how to cope with post-rape sequellae. The woman is seen as needing to resume full control of her life,

within a supporting community of women, in order that she can again make necessary decisions about her life. Crisis center counselling is most often oriented towards assisting her to discuss the rape event, to make decisions, and to direct personal changes in her life with self-responsibility.

Issues of confidentiality and cooperation with the criminal justice system have arisen in several states, threatening the rape crisis centers and their ability to work with women victims. Increased use of anonymous phone services and less use of face-to-face services have resulted whenever the criminal justice system tests the legal status of promised confidentiality for crisis center volunteer staff (Appelbaum & Roth, 1981; Meisel, 1981).

Many crisis center volunteers believe that the woman victim herself must make decisions about reporting rape. The ideology of returning decision-making control to the victim as soon as possible is often in direct conflict with the desire of the criminal justice system for more adequate reporting. Decisions about reporting and prosecuting are very difficult one for victims.

Ideological conflicts of women within the anti-rape movement are common. Some women, defining themselves as radical feminists, believe that

establishment institutions are so entrenched in male supremacy and patriarchal domination that they are useless to women after rape. Others, also defining themselves as radical feminists, work within establishment institutions to provide services. Apparently one of the issues is ideological purity. When women within the women's movement accept or use with each other labels such as radical feminist, reformist feminist, mainline feminist, or moderate feminist, they intimate the intensity of debate about ideology. Rape crisis centers have been especially divided on the topic of correct belief about peer counselling and therapy. Strong opinions about politically correct beliefs and actions have divided woman from woman: there have been conflicts about the proper political understanding of the presence of rape in women's lives as well as conflicts about the proper, needed, or most helpful response to rape survivors.

Radical feminism's distrust of formalized, professionalized psychotherapy is concretely focused by the issue of rape for many women. Philosopher M. Daly (1978) explicates this judgment with laser-like clarity. Crisis counselling, after rape, may be needed by women and can be useful to them. However, for Daly, psychotherapy is neither necessary nor helpful (pp. 280-281).

One way of understanding this issue is to identify how healing processes for women after rape are described. Political understandings of women's realities imply systemic problems needing systemic cures. Pathology lies within the system; therefore, healing involves the woman by engaging her in political consciousness-raising as well as in personal stress reduction. Therapeutic understandings, on the other hand, imply the presence of illness or personal weakness in the woman. Healing, therefore, becomes a personalized process of understanding, acceptance, and resolution of this intense personal crisis.

Political compromises about what is probable or likely in any given community are altering the initial vision of the first rape crisis centers about what was desired and possible. In processes of communal decision-making, both within feminism itself and within the larger community of concerned individuals, rape survivors encounter a variety of ideologies. Women who survive rape and who approach a rape crisis center of any kind are reaping the benefits of two decades of feminist work. Feminist women early in the 1970s determined to know themselves. By telling each other stories about their own lives, they discovered that sexual violence was an element in many women's stories.

They decided to work towards ending that violence and towards healing those women who were already wounded by events of sexual violence.

Feminist women can look at history and know that they have begun to change the direction and trajectory of history in at least one dimension of women's lives. The story of sexual violence, once so hidden from view and so filled with silent shame for the woman who was violated, has now begun to be a story told in anger and a story told in hope. In Griffin's words, "We are saying the matter is intolerable" [emphasis hers] (1979, p. 30).

## Chapter 2

### Women and Sexual Violence: A Likely Story

What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open.

Muriel Rukeyser  
Kathe Kollwitz

#### Introduction

The story of rape and sexual violence in an individual woman's life is a story of terror and crisis. P. Tribble (1984) reminds us that our knowledge of the texts of terror is a wounding event and that such wounding is permanent. The anguish of this terrible wounding is present to the woman who hears the story as well as to the woman who tells the story.

To tell and hear tales of terror is to wrestle demons in the night, without a compassionate God to save us . . . . The fight itself is solitary and intense. We struggle mightily, only to be wounded. But yet we hold on, seeking a blessing: the healing of wounds and the restoration of health. If the blessing comes . . . it does not come on our terms. Indeed, as we leave the land of terror, we limp. (p. 15)

While Tribble refers to ancient texts which are claimed by Jews and Christians as part of the revelation of God, this dissertation refers to the



ordinary texts of today's world, women's spoken and written stories. Nevertheless, Tribble's comments are apropos of these more common stories also.

One consequence of the contemporary women's movement in the United States is that many more women are telling stories of their personal encounters with sexual violence. Rape, usually experienced by women one at a time, has become recognized by some women as a statistical probability for the life histories of many women. Rape is one story of women told within a socio-cultural context that includes many other forms of sexual violence as well.

The Cultural Matrix of Sexual Violence Against Women:  
Demographic Research Issues

Providing an accurate and meaningful description of the rates and range of sexual violence in the United States is difficult for several reasons. Uniform research definitions do not occur across demographic studies. Some authors use Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) definitions of a criminal act of sexual violence while others utilize definitions which are abstracted from particular state law codes. In addition, occasional demographic studies create more

idiosyncratic definitions. Thus, among demographic studies, sexual violence statistics may vary widely.

In addition, much demographic research relies upon data generated by police or other members of local, state or federal criminal justice systems. In a study based upon data collected from a written survey of 50 police departments and from 13 on site visits to metropolitan police departments, L. Brodyaga and associates (1974) describe some of the problems with national demographic information generated by police or other criminal justice system personnel. In their study of police departments Brodyaga, et al. discovered that it is the reporting patrol officer who establishes the initial estimate of victim credibility. That estimate often reflects a departmental ranking of crime response priorities. Some of the departments surveyed had specialized rape support squads with technical expertise while others had not. Police departments with specialized support and investigation units believed that such specialized units enabled them to increase the successful resolution of rape cases, i.e., the apprehension and conviction of the rapist.

The critical issue of police department unfounding rape complaints is one of the central issues in demographic studies of sexual violence. In many police departments, officers have the prerogative to unfound

complaints. Unfounding is usually a patrol officer's decision or his supervising officer's. Unfounding is based upon someone's estimate of the complainant's credibility. Brodyaga, et al. comment, "This extraordinary concern for the authenticity of rape complaints is manifested in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports--forcible rape is the only crime for which an 'unfounded' rape [sic] is calculated" (p. 15). The officer's judgment as well as police department policies create a wide variation in report rates which are reported to the FBI.

Some police departments have used the 'unfounded' label to reduce the rate of reported rape with the stroke of a pen. Others have used this category to reduce the number of open cases. And still others have allowed this label to cover inappropriate judgments by their officers. (p. 49)

In addition to the difficulties presented by variable definitions and the practice of unfounding, variations in population parameters make cross-study comparisons or correlations difficult. Some research studies establish a hospital or emergency service based population; others utilize a population defined by the criminal justice system; others use volunteer populations solicited by the media; and still others attempt to randomly sample a specifically controlled population. For example, much current rape research is being done within college-based populations. It is,

therefore, limited in generalizability because of the specialized characteristics of that group: age cohort, classroom locus of research, volunteer participation, education level and limited life experience.

Another difficulty is the establishment of age parameters for various study populations. Some researchers include the life experiences of children as well as adults. Others identify a particular age configuration as necessary to the research question.

Finally, some studies include male victims of sexual assault as well as female ones while other studies do not do so. Some of the studies which include both genders focus only upon child victims; others concentrate upon incarcerated populations of adolescent and/or adult men and women.

Time magazine brings awareness of this statistical morass to the attention of the general public in its September 5, 1983 issue. K. Anderson writes in that issue:

When statisticians turn to private violence, the numbers become iffy, approximate in the extreme. Are there 650,000 cases of child abuse annually, or a million? Or 6 million? Bona fide experts, extrapolating and just guessing, variously cite all those figures and others. It is said that every year 2 million women are beaten by their husbands, and it is also said that nearly 6 million are. Pick your figure. A Justice Department survey counted 178,000 rapes during 1981, but for every woman who reported a rape to

the police, perhaps nine or maybe 25 did not. It is beyond dispute, however, that extraordinary numbers of women and children are being brutalized by those closest to them. (p. 18)

United States Department of Justice Statistics

Professionals within the criminal justice system as well as those within the clinical professions of medicine, nursing, psychology and social work are convinced that rape is an under-reported phenomenon in most demographic research reports. One consequence of this opinion is that frequency data about rape's prevalence in women's lives must always be considered as tentative. No one, at the time of this writing, can state accurately the statistical incidence of rape in the United States. There is no commonly accepted consensus about rape statistics. However, there are growing indications about the prevalence of rape. Researchers are beginning to believe that rape attempts or completed rape may directly affect the lives of one in four women in the United States. This belief is based upon multiple small studies among various research populations. Some of these studies are descriptive studies. Others attempt to generate probability data. The impact of their combined message

is that all women in the United States live within a virulent epidemic of sexual violence which is directed primarily at them.

The annually published federal crime index, The Uniform Crime Report (1986), identifies rape as one of the fastest growing crimes against persons. Among personal crimes, it has the lowest proportion of cases closed by arrests. Yearly editions of this federal report warn the reader that rape statistics are greatly under-reported.

From 1972 to 1986 reported rape statistics grew steadily and rapidly. In 1972, The Uniform Crime Report documented 46,430 rapes during 1971. An additional 15% of reported rapes had been unfounded and were therefore not included in the year's numerical tally. The total of 46,430 rapes yielded a rate of 43 rapes/100,000 women. The nation's rape crime clock counted off one rape every 10 minutes. By 1986, The Uniform Crime Report documented 87,340 reported rapes during 1985, a rate of 71/100,000 women. The crime clock counted off one rape every six minutes and unfounding rates were no longer reported.

A second publication by the United States Department of Justice, The Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics (1986), illustrates rape reporting problems within the federal criminal justice system.

The statistics of this report are based upon data randomly collected in the National Crime Survey program conducted by the United States Census Bureau.

Utilizing the Census Bureau's capacity to perform representative sampling surveys, the Crime Survey program attempts to gather more accurate statistics about victimization from a variety of crimes. Only individuals of 12 years or older are included as survey subjects.

For 1983, the total number of rapes reported was 154,180. Of this total 72,427 (47%) were reported to the police; 80,346 were not reported (52%) and 1,407 (1%) were unknown (p. 83). For 1984, the total number was 179,981, of which 100,699 (56%) were reported to police; 79,222 (44%) were not reported (p. 84).

That rape rates are reported as increasing is clear. Debate in much criminology literature raises the questions of why. It is possible that there is better and more uniform reporting of this crime by police. It is also possible that more women are reporting sexual assault crimes. In these two scenarios, the incidence of rape has not increased, only its reporting. In addition to the above two possibilities is a third: incidence of rape is itself increasing. Most criminologists, as well as most clinicians, believe that most likely all three factors

are at work. More women report, more police officers and departments report, and more rape events are occurring now than occurred earlier.

Medical and Social Science Incidence Research Findings  
Incest and Sexual Molestation

In the following discussion of sexual violence statistics, rape incidence studies will be placed contextually within a research universe of findings about sexual violence. This is necessary in order to intimate the cultural matrix of sexual violence in which women live from infancy until old age. However, it is also necessary because some studies overlap their data or their data analysis. Contextualization demonstrates the range of behaviors usually considered in research studies of sexual assaults. "Mild" forms of sexual assault, the "tiny rapes" (Medea & Thompson, 1974) of work related sexual harassment, sexual insults, obscene phone calls, and street harassment behaviors will not be reviewed in a comprehensive way.

However, there is common wisdom in the anti-rape movement which indicates that nearly every woman can expect to experience at least some of these "small" assaults in her lifetime. Psychiatrist J. L. Herman in a recent workshop for psychotherapists asked women to



raise their hands if they had personally experienced a small assault. Nearly every woman present in an audience of more than 400 professional women raised her hand. Herman's informal comment was that this show of hands was a typical response in many of the female audiences that she addressed every year (Herman, 1987).

That Herman's intuition is on target is reinforced by a small study of college women done in 1979 by Herold, Mantl and Zemitis. Their research sample consisted of 104 college women between the ages of 18 and 24. In this group 92% were single. From this exploratory sample, 84% of these women reported at least one sexual offense: 61% had received obscene phone calls; 44% had been molested sexually as children; 27% had been the object of an exhibitionist; 24% had been followed in a manner they perceived as threatening; 16% reported an attempted rape while 1% reported completed rapes.

These young women most often had discussed the offenses with peers. Few were reported to the police or other authorities. In the women's self-reports, they saw these events as essentially private, personal matters. Most did not believe that the offender would be either apprehended or punished. Some of the women reported embarrassment at the prospect of talking with

police officers. Police were seen as unwilling to prosecute in sexual offenses. Some women were afraid of reprisals from perpetrators.

Incest and sexual molestation of children is one form of sexual violence. Beginning with A. Kinsey's (1953) data ( $N = 4441$ ), research studies have consistently demonstrated significant quantities of sexual assaults directed at children. In the retrospective Kinsey work, one woman in four reported sexual contact with adult males before they themselves had reached the age of 12. Of this population, 6% experienced a sexual relationship with an older male relative; while for 1% that relationship was with the father. Kinsey's subjects reported that they knew most of their assailants prior to these sexual encounters.

D. Finkelhor's more recent retrospective study of New England college students (1979) indicates that 19.2% of the women studied ( $n = 530$ ) and 8.6% of the men ( $n = 266$ ) had experienced sexual violation as children. The most common form of victimization was brother-sister incest directed at girl children while 1% involved father-daughter relationships.

Herman (1984) quotes unpublished data from D. Russell's research project in San Francisco. In Russell's retrospective survey about sexual violence previously experienced by women, 38% of the research

subjects reported a childhood sexual contact with an adult male: 16% was with a male relative and more than 4% was father-daughter incest.

Herman and Hirschman (1981) reviewed five research studies from 1940 until 1978. Acknowledging weakness in the research protocols (subjects were primarily white, middle-class women), these authors summarize the common findings; one fifth to one third of all these women surveyed reported a childhood sexual encounter with an adult male.

Finally, M. D. Pagelow (1984) identifies the sexual abuse of children as a major form of violence in families. She writes:

It is reasonable to say that more than a quarter million children are victims of incest each year in the United States. Put another way, about one of every five females and one out of every eleven males are sexually victimized during childhood, usually by family members or trusted friends of family. (p. 59)

Total abuse of children by adults is conservatively estimated at nearly one million cases annually (Magnussen, 1983, p. 21). Sexual violence directed at small children is in and by itself a microcosm of this violence.

### Physical Battering and Rape

Incidence statistics about the presence of physical battering of women are difficult to identify with precision. Time magazine (1983) claims that approximately 2,000 to 4,000 women are beaten to death each year (O'Reilly, p. 23). In their book, Behind Closed Doors (1980), M. Straus and associates report results from a research project involving a randomly selected sample of 2143 persons (women,  $n = 1183$  and men,  $n = 960$ ). The decision to ask spouse battering questions, while a part of the research design, reveals the flaw of this particular research protocol. The primary purpose of this research project was to study violence towards children in intact, nuclear families. The subsidiary question of spouse abuse was also asked in that context. Therefore, data was collected only from intact families with children present in the home. Subjects from their study reported a 3.8% rate of battering by the spouse. Statistical manipulations of their research data and of national population data led the research team to report that 1.8 million women annually are battered by their spouses. In addition, they report that perhaps one-third to one-half of these women are raped during an episode or episodes of spousal battering (pp. 31-50).

The specific relationship of battering to rape has been explored in several small studies. However, the non-random, highly selective nature of the populations studied limits the conclusiveness of any of these studies. Pagelow, (Russell, 1982, p. 382) in a study of 325 battered women, indicated that 37% had also been sexually assaulted. C. Hanneke and N. A. Shields (1985) in a study of women clients reported that 46% of the battered women seen in their clinical practice had also experienced marital rape.

I. H. Frieze, (1983) in a study involving 137 women volunteers from a group of self-identified battered women, utilized a matched control methodology. In this study group 34% of the volunteer subjects indicated that they had been raped by their husband as part of the battering experiences. However, 43% of these women indicated that sex was unpleasant because they were being forced to have sex. In the comparison control group, 48 women reported battering by a spouse. Of this group, 6% reported spouse rape as part of battering. In the comparison control group an additional 1% of the non-battered women reported spouse rape. Of the remaining never raped women 11% reported that they were pressured into intercourse by threats of force. Parenthetically, it is important to note that

many states now define the threat of force to obtain intercourse as rape even though neither Frieze nor her subjects did so.

### Spouse Rape

D. Finkelhor and K. Yllo (Russell, 1982, p. 63) did an exploratory study with a group of women ( $N = 133$ ) drawn from a family planning center client population. Subjects were either married or previously married women. In this group, 9% of the women reported experiences of forced sex. However, among the divorced segment of the population sample, 21% reported forced spousal sex. In a second study, Finkelhor and Yllo (Finkelhor, Gelles, Hotaling & Straus, 1983, p. 120) studied a representative sample of Boston women. The researchers reported that 10% of the women who had ever been married reported physical force or the threat of physical force as part of their marital sexual relationships.

D. Russell (1982) in an extensive survey of sexual violence in San Francisco, utilized an accepted random sampling protocol in order to examine multiple aspects of sexual violence. Within one section of her study, Russell studied rape within marriage. Russell's research definition of forcible rape utilized the 1978

California statute in which rape was defined as penile-vaginal penetration obtained by force or the threat of force. In addition, California's 1978 code also included a recognized lack of ability to give consent as constituting rape. Included in this category was unconsciousness in sleep, unconsciousness from alcohol or drug use and helplessness in any manner. Omitted, thus, in Russell's definition of rape was forced sodomy, fellatio or cunnilingus. Identifying a sample of 930 women, randomly selected by the Field Research Corporation, a San Francisco marketing and public opinion research firm, Russell selected a multi-ethnic research interviewing team that represented white, Asian, black and Latina segments of the San Francisco community. All researchers were extensively trained in the research protocol to be used. In addition to spousal rape, Russell also asked about cohabitation rape.

Russell's findings report that 14% of women ever married had been raped by a husband (1982, p. 57). Thus, "approximately one in every seven women who has ever been married in our San Francisco sample was willing to disclose an experience of sexual assault by their husbands that met our quite conservative definition of rape" (p. 57).

From her data analysis Russell estimates the prevalence of marital or cohabitational rape. Russell expands her statistics of rape to include the total number of incidents reported by subjects rather than a previously used unitary "if ever happened" count system. After she analyzed her data based upon this system of accounting for multiple incident of rape and battering, she concluded:

When rape and attempted rape are combined, this method of calculating the prevalence of rape by the type of assailant resulted in rape by husbands and ex-husbands being by far the most prevalent (979 incidents), followed by rape by lovers and ex-lovers (344 incidents), acquaintances (237 incidents), relatives other than husbands (209 incidents), dates (196 incidents), authority figures (180 incidents), boyfriends (165 incidents), strangers (156 incidents), friend of the respondent (100 incidents), and finally friends of the family (22 incidents). (p. 67)

When the total of incidents is tallied, 2588 separate incidents of rape are identified, a rate of nearly 2.8 assaults per woman. It would be easy to discredit this finding as sensational were it not for the research protocol credibility established by the research marketing group and the carefulness of the research interview team. The conservative definition of rape also lends great credibility to Russell's findings.



### High School and College-Age Women:

#### A Population at High Risk

Sexual violence directed at high school and college-age women is not a new phenomenon that has emerged within the last two decades. In 1957, E. Kanin studied male sex aggression in a freshman university class. In his findings he reports that 262 freshmen women reported that during the year prior to university entrance they experienced unwanted (necking-rape continuum) male sexual aggression. In the sample population, 29.5% of the women reported unwanted intercourse while 8.6% reported coerced coitus (pp. 52-58).

In a second study, D. Kilpatrick and E. Kanin (1957) asked freshmen university women about sexual aggression experienced during their university studies. With 291 women sampled from 22 separate university classes, 162 women reported 1022 offenses of unwanted sexual contacts. It is interesting to note that 27.1% of their subjects met today's criterion of rape (coitus obtained by force or the threat of force).

Newsweek (Seligman, April 9, 1984, p. 91) reported on research done by the National Center for the Prevention and Control of Rape. Of young women who reported rape to the Center's research team, 92%

informed the interviewers that they knew their assailant. Although it is estimated, according to Newsweek, that acquaintance rape accounts for 60% of all reported rapes, 90% of these assaults never are reported to police. With high school and college-age women from 15 to 24, date rape occurs with sobering frequency. There is a tendency among this population of young women to accept responsibility for the sexual assault and to avoid reporting it to police, parents, or other authority figures (Koss, 1988a; 1988b).

R. Binder (1981) surveyed 167 university students about personal experiences with sexual violence: 20% of these women indicated that they had been sexually assaulted. Twenty-four of the women reported 38 separate incidents of adult (over age 18) rape while 9 reported childhood assaults (between the ages of 4 and 15). The women had reported 18% of the adult rapes and 11% of the childhood ones.

M. Koss has been studying sexual assaults and rape among college student women. In 1982, Koss and her associate C. Oros developed the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) of 12 items for men or women plus a 13th for women only which asks specifically about being raped. In research studies with college men ( $n = 1846$ ) and college women ( $n = 2016$ ), 6% of the women answered the rape question affirmatively. However, 8.2%

responded that they had experienced forced intercourse in some manner. Koss and Oros conclude that the SES research instrument can be used to identify women who have been raped but who do not define forced intercourse as rape.

In a 1985 study, Koss used the SES tool to identify hidden victims as subjects for a subsequent personal interview. Her sample interview subjects included 82 women identified as non-victims and 149 women identified as hidden victims. None of the women in the unacknowledged rape (forced intercourse) category reported the unwanted intercourse to police, hospital or other rape crisis center. Koss summarizes her research by stating that it is now possible to document the existence of hidden rape among college-age women and to describe its victims. While 38% of the women studied during this survey reported sexual victimizations that met Ohio's legal definition of rape or attempted rape, only 4% of these women had reported this assault to the police. In this study one in 12 college men admitted to raping, forcing (therefore, raping also), or attempting to force intercourse with women (p. 56).

Koss (Warshaw, 1988) has recently completed a study for Ms. in which 6159 (women, n = 3187 and men,

n = 2972) college students were surveyed on 32 college and university campuses across America. In this study 71 pages of information were gathered from each student subject in a classroom environment. She found that one in four student women were victims of rape or attempted rape. Out of this group, 84% of the women who were raped knew their attacker and 57% of the rapes happened on dates (p. 12). From the total group of women whose sexual assault met the legal definition of rape used in the study, only 27% identified their experiences as rape (p. 26). The average age when a rape event occurred (for men as perpetrators or for women as victims) was 18 1/2.

Koss (1988a) reported in a public forum for college educators, counselors, and student personnel administrators that as a result of her recent studies she now believes that one in four college women will experience sexual violence in the form of rape or attempted rape. Within this population of college women, half of these assaults will occur before college years and half will occur during college. She stated unequivocally that women in the age cohort group of 15 to 25 are currently at highest risk for experiencing a sexual assault or completed rape. Much of this violence will be date rape.

Others have also worked with the SES tool. B. Miller and J. Marshall (1987) used it on two university campuses, one in the South and one in the Midwest. They randomly chose courses from the Spring 1985 schedule of classes and asked for professors' permissions to enter these courses. Of 70 professors identified, 18 gave the research team permission to survey their classes about sexual violence. A sample of 795 university students, men ( $n = 472$ ) and women ( $n = 323$ ), was identified.

Findings of the Miller and Marshall survey indicated that 27% of the women had been involved in forced sexual intercourse in a dating situation. Women were asked if they had informed anyone: 66% had informed someone. Out of this group, 34% had told a friend; 5% had informed a counselor; and 2% had notified a law enforcement officer (pp. 38-47). In addition, Miller and Marshall found that 15% of the men indicated that they had initiated forced sexual intercourse while dating.

In another study of sexual violence in academic settings, B. Lott, M. E. Reilly and D. R. Howard (1982) surveyed University of Rhode Island students, faculty and staff after a much publicized sexual assault on that campus. A random sample of 1,954 persons from a total possible population of 13,617 was selected. A

return yield of 47.7% was obtained. The Rhode Island statute on sexual assaults was used to provide the research definition of sexual assault (forced sexual contact without consent involving touching and/or penetration).

In this study, 39 women (1/14) and 3 men (1/125) reported a personal sexual assault at the university. Of these assaults, only 11% were reported to the police. In addition, 161 women and 20 men reported a sexual assault somewhere other than at the university. Of these, 3% had been reported to the police and 1% had been reported to a lawyer. The researchers conclude, "The conclusion is inescapable that sexual assault is not a rare occurrence and will be experienced at least once by perhaps 25% of all women" (p. 319).

Following the statistical research protocol, the research team interviewed a smaller sample of university undergraduate women. Some of these young women's conclusions about men's and women's relationships with each other are disturbing:

Women must expect to be sexually approached, teased and insulted.

(Such) behavior by men is the way things are, its not fair, but reality. It's part of being a woman.

Girls who tease (men) deserve rape.

The responsibility for avoiding rape is the woman's. (pp. 316-17)

J. Makepeace (1981) studied courtship violence but did not specifically ask about rape. He included threats of violence, pushing, slapping, punching, striking with an object, assault with a weapon, choking and other. From his study of freshmen and sophomore college women ( $N = 202$ ), 21.5% reported having experienced one or more forms of such violence while 61.5% reported knowing someone else with experiences of this kind of violence.

#### Rape Probability in the United States

Attempting to estimate rape probability figures, C. Warner (1980) utilized the 1972 National Crime Panel report in the following manner. Approximately 250,000 persons were interviewed about crime victimization in the 12-month period prior to the interview. The decision to name or describe an attack as rape was totally left to a woman's discretion. During this survey, one woman in 317 spontaneously reported that she had experienced a sexual assault in the preceding 12 months. Of these assaults, one-fourth were completed rapes while three-fourths were avoided rapes.

Utilizing a life expectancy figure of 76.7 years for women, statistical calculations were performed to extend this data and to create prediction data. The outcome was a prediction factor that one woman in six could expect to experience an attempted rape in her lifetime while one in 24 would experience a completed rape. Warner then abstracted an estimate from her clinical practice with women in which two-thirds of the women she knew clinically did not report rapes nor would they agree to report rapes to an unknown interviewer. Warner, utilizing this clinical data as a statistical reality, estimated that one woman in eight could, therefore, expect to be the victim of a completed rape in her lifetime.

A. Johnson (1980) utilized the same baseline data from the 1972 National Crime Panel report. However, he manipulated statistics in an alternative manner. He utilized the age specific cohorts of the Crime Panel's report and within each age cohort identified age-specific annual rates of victimization. In other words, he identified a rape rate for each age category. Thus, he could construct a statistical report of age 12 rape rates from the Crime Panel data. Johnson, in fact, focused upon the age bracket of 12 to 15 year-olds. He assessed their vulnerability-to-rape factor. Assuming 100,000 girl children at birth, he



used mortality tables to factor in a statistical measure of death likelihood. Therefore, in the 12-15 age bracket, 97,800 girls were assumed to be alive and, therefore, eligible to be exposed to the risk of rape.

Johnson then calculated risk of rape within each age group in a cumulative manner. By utilizing this methodology, Johnson predicted that in their lifetime members of this specific twelve-year-old cohort group had a 4.1% rape factor. Therefore, 4,056 of them could expect to be raped. In simple terms, four out of every 100 twelve year-olds in this cohort group could expect to be raped in their lifetimes.

He then extended his data by using the Crime Panel's data about the relationship of actual rapes to reported rapes. Accepting statistics in which only one half of all rapes are reported, a statistical factor accepted within the Crime Panel's report as very conservative, Johnson further adjusted his statistics. He then estimated that eight of these girls out of 100 could expect a completed rape in her lifetime.

By means of additional calculations, Johnson re-worked his figures using S. Brownmiller's (1975) estimate that perhaps one in five rapes is reported. With this calculation, the estimated probability of

completed rape rose to 20%. By this calculation he established the probability factor of one woman in five.

In 1980, Johnson wrote that "A conservative estimate is that, under current conditions, 20-30% of girls now twelve years old will suffer a violent sexual attack during the remainder of their lives" (p. 145). He then reminded his readers that the National Crime Panel had surveyed only people aged 12 or older. Thus, children's experiences with incest and molesting were not and could not be factored into his statistical calculations. If Johnson is correct in his statistical analysis of the Crime Panel Data, two or three girls in ten from the 1980 twelve-year-old cohort group can expect a completed sexual assault in their lifetimes.

Russell and Howell (1983) replicated Johnson's methodology in the establishment of probability factors from data gathered in San Francisco. However, since the Russell interview schedule included questions about childhood sexual assaults, they were able to complete probability estimates for girl children under the age of 12 also. Women in San Francisco, according to Russell and Howell, have a 46% probability factor of experiencing attempted or completed rape. They have a 26% probability factor for completed rape.

D. Hicks (1980) reported on her practice as a physician in the Jackson Memorial Hospital Rape Treatment Center in Miami, Florida. In her article she describes selective statistics from contacts with 5187 victims: 34% of these raped patients were under the age of 16; 5% were males; the age range was from two months to 93 years. Hick's age continuum appears to represent the widest reported age differential of victims in the current literature and is widely quoted.

#### Conclusions

The demographic story of sexual violence is a story of anger and pain to women. It is wounding to those who tell this story as well as to those who hear it. The presence of sexual violence in the United States is so pervasive that each woman needs to ask of herself whether and when she too will become a victim. Probability statistics of one woman in eight (Warner, 1980), one woman in five (Johnson, 1980), and one woman in four (Russell and Howell, 1983) are sufficient to create terror and rage in any woman who hears them and who asks herself about her own safety or the safety of any other woman whom she loves. An age range of two months to 93 years of age indicates the need for perpetual awareness of this virulent epidemic in the

lives of today's women and girl children. Adult rape of women occurs within a cultural climate that tolerates many forms of violence against women. Women know that they will likely experience sexual insults, obscene phone calls or other forms of "petty" violence against them. Most women do not yet adequately comprehend the growing possibility that they will encounter severe, assaultive sexual violence attempts in their own lives.

Learning to hear this story of rape happens only as women allow the wounding of their sister's rape story to be their own wounding. Learning to tell the stories happens as women develop trust in the healing, hearing presence of other women.

In their narration of rape stories, women tell us of events of terror. As women bring "to story" an episode or multiple episodes of sexual violence in their lives, they narrate a text of violence, powerlessness, helplessness, isolation and enforced silence. The terror and the consequent wounding created by women's rape stories is most revealed in women-only meetings where women can share talk about the presence of sexual violence in their own lives or in the lives of other women. It is in these settings where women attempt to find and describe the meaning of sexual violence to their lives.

Women have begun to tell the story of sexual violence in women's lives. The world, both for those who tell such a story and for those who listen to it, has "split open."

### Chapter 3

#### The Social Sciences and Rape Research

Worlds and worldviews change only  
when their building blocks--the  
constructs of language and thought  
--change first.

Patricia Roth Schwartz  
Belles Lettres

#### Introduction

Within the social science research paradigm, information is gathered bit by bit. From the accumulation of data, theories are then developed construct by construct. The building blocks of social science theories are descriptive or experimental research studies. In general, social scientists study human behavior in order to understand or devise "situation centered" (Zimbardo, 1985, p. 569) explanations of human behavior. Rather than considering the individual as the "significant unit of causality" (p. 569), social psychologists study the interaction of the individual and her social groups. They are interested in the contextual relationships of individual, setting, activities, and social principles or rules which govern human behavior.

Because social psychologists study human subjects as they interact with others and with an environmental context, the factor of human interpretation enters into their conceptions about human behavior. H. Gleitman comments, "Humans don't respond to other people's actions automatically; they respond to those actions as they interpret them" (1986, p. 367). Thus, in Gleitman's view, any individual human response to a situation is dependent upon that person's understanding of it. And, implicitly, any researcher's understanding is also grounded within some system of interpretation.

P. G. Zimbardo (1985) postulates a governing set of internalized working rules as a part of each social interaction. These social rules are culturally established. According to Zimbardo, "social reality is the . . . common view of an event, activity, or person" (1985, p. 571). It can be formal and stated in official actions such as laws or constitutions. However, most social reality is informally derived within habitual daily interactions with others and with the environment.

Each culture has inherited from its ancestors a certain organizing worldview of beliefs, expectations, and values. Within any given culture, a unique set of categories, concepts and organizing principles govern daily life and its ordinary as well as its

extraordinary encounters. Each individual or group of individuals within any given society is likely to accept and enact these principles unselfconsciously. When dealing with cultural givens, much behavior which feels "natural" is likely, in reality, to be guided by intuitive, informal and spontaneous acceptance of learned cultural realities.

L. Birke (1986) discusses the concept of "natural" in the following ways. Natural can mean biologically determined or preordained by nature itself. For example, pregnancy is natural to women. A second sense of the word natural is defined as closeness to nature. In this usage, Birke talks about natural food as opposed to processed food. The third use is to imply statistical normality. In other words, most people commonly act or understand an act in a similar way. Finally, there is a normative element in that people are expected to act in a certain way (pp. 13-14).

It is through social and personal processes of dissonance that cultural and personal consciousness change. That which was once perceived as "natural" and accepted as unquestioned reality undergoes scrutiny. Scrutiny lends itself to processes of changing consciousness.

H. Gleitman (1986) discusses cognitive consistency and dissonance. People, faced with other's behavior or



with environmental events, try to make sense or meaning out of that which they encounter. To do this, they look for consistency among their personal experiences and memories or, by making comparisons with what they know of others, they seek confirmation among their fellow humans. When they find consistency, there is comfort and ease. The world makes sense. It has meaning. There is understanding.

However, when the encounter does not make sense and the person's experiences do not fit with either her own previously experienced realities or with those reported by others, cognitive dissonance results. It is generally believed by psychologists that the human experience of cognitive dissonance will trigger attempts to return to cognitive consistency and consonancy (Gleitman, pp. 370-371).

Some related issues arise in studies of cognitive dissonance. One is that of logical consistency. The person attempts to make sense by re-creating memories of her own sensory experience to fit a preexisting logical belief system. Another is self-protection. Social psychologists believe that individuals strive to maintain a favorable self picture. A third is to change beliefs and, thereby, to accept an alternative logical system (Gleitman, 375-376).

Another major construct in psychology is found within research that focuses upon human perception. Forming and holding impressions is also a process of interpretation and evaluation (Gleitman, p. 377). Personal traits or attributes are used to assess what the individual is really like, to assess what her invariant characteristics are. Gleitman writes, "To put it another way, the attempt to understand what another person is like boils down to an effort to notice the consistencies of what he [sic] does over time and under different circumstances" (p. 378).

One way in which humans organize perceptual data is to identify a central trait and use it to assist their perception of the whole. This central trait acts as a focus around which the total impression of the person or event was organized.

In addition, humans seek for consistency and predictability within other persons by making inferences about their behavior and its causality. In other words, individuals make attributions about others. Attributions can be based upon external situational factors or upon internal dispositional characteristics. Some issues which are related to attribution theories are attractiveness judgments, proximity and familiarity, and similarity. Cultural agreements about physical attractiveness carry a halo

effect. When a person is seen as attractive, there is a strong likelihood that she will also be judged as good.

Proximity to others brings familiarity and humans appear to be most comfortable with that which is familiar. Finally, human similarity research shows that people tend to like those who are most similar to themselves (Gleitman, pp. 379-385).

Social scientists who study rape and other forms of sexual violence do so, then, within an interactional context of individuals, groups, expectations, values, governing rules and worldviews. Due at least partially to the impact of feminism and its critique of patriarchal realities, the cultural worldview surrounding rape's reality has begun to change. Changes in social science research questions about rape both help to create and to reflect social and cultural changes in belief structures.

#### Victim Precipitation, Victim Resistance:

##### Social Thinking About Rape

In the immediate past, before the 1970s, cultural views of rape reflected a legal heritage in which rape was a property crime against the guardian of a woman (Brownmiller, 1975), and a socioreligious heritage in

which the woman's sexuality itself was considered tainted or evil (Bullough & Bullough, 1974). Within that kind of cultural context, rape researchers were most interested in theories of victim precipitation and victimizer pathology. There was more concern in much of the literature with protecting the alleged assailant from the claims of a nonlegitimate victim than with listening to the woman in her own accounts of rape. Issues of the "legitimate victim" (Weis and Borges, 1975, p. 91) were seen from a worldview of suspicion about women's motivations in reporting rape.

Written from the perspective of semantic field analysis of the word rape, M. Schulz (1975) addresses sociocultural understandings about rape with clarity and conciseness:

If our metaphors for rape are clearly suggestive of violence, debasement, and plunder, does it follow that the language expresses what we feel to be the true nature of the act? Yes and no. We have, in our culture at least, a strange phenomenon with respect to rape. There seems to be a widespread view that rape seldom occurs -that women want it, or ask for it, or fantasize it, or, in the end, consent to it. Our language acknowledges that rape is a vicious and violent act that must inevitably traumatize its victim. On the other hand, a large number of the speakers of our language deny this to be the case. (p. 68)

M. Amir's (1971) extensive studies about rape represent the last comprehensive research work in which

victim precipitation and rape as a sexual crime are the dominating themes underlying data analysis. In that book he wrote that victim precipitated rape occurred when the victim's behavior was such that it could be interpreted by her assailant as signaling sexual desire and availability for sexual contact. His own stated bias was that in some ways the "victim is always the cause of the crime" (1971, p. 258).

In his analysis of findings he concluded that a woman's sexual history signaled her availability to the male. If the assailant believed her to be promiscuous with other men, she was assumed to be likewise available to him. Prior consenting (or nonconsenting) sexual relationships were assumed to signal continuing sexual availability. Shared marital status with the woman automatically signaled sexual availability. In other words, marriage itself gave a man the presumptive right of sexual access. Finally, situations in which a woman's behavior was questionable according to social mores (for example, accepting a drink from a stranger) were seen as signaling assent for a sexual contact.

The notion of victim precipitation rests, therefore, upon a culturally defined and accepted construct of consent or nonconsent. Decisions about victim consent or nonconsent are used to establish responsibility for events of sexual assault. The

presence of such an underlying construct of consent or nonconsent as the determining factor in considering responsibility for initiating a rape event ignores a concept of vulnerability. It also ignores the woman's own experiences in defining a rape event. And it further redefines the woman's own behavioral choices around the polar reality of sexual intercourse, rather than around other organizing concepts, such as violence, in her own reality (Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1983).

R. S. Albin (1977), in her review of the historical antecedents of current rape research, focused upon psychoanalytic theories of female masochism, fantasy and wish-fulfillment as one cultural source of victim precipitation beliefs. Within psychoanalytically influenced victim precipitation research, the absence or presence of victim resistance is an important consideration. If the woman did not resist, she was seen as culpable. Frequently she was seen as behaviorally enacting a pre-rape wish or fantasy. If, however, she resisted and failed, she was frequently judged as insufficiently motivated to prevent her own rape. To be a credible rape victim the woman needed to be either severely injured or dead. Within these two outcomes, rape was believed to have happened.

Thus, women who were raped were subjected to concerns about their causal responsibility for their own rape event. Albin (1977) proposes that the shift of opinion away from victim precipitation theories about rape was due to feminist women who proposed that rape was an aggressive political act of violent power directed against women rather than a sexual crime of female provoked male passion. Cultural movement toward other forms of research followed the lead of feminist theorizing.

R. J. Berger and P. Searles (1985) criticized all forms of victim precipitation research precisely because they imply that the victim shares responsibility for her own rape with her assailant. In its presuppositions, victim precipitation literature presents the victim as inviting her attack. In their work, the outcome of such shared responsibility is establishing reasonable doubt about the offender's responsibility in initiating an attack.

W. Loh (1981), in an analysis of the 1974 Michigan legal code reform, concurs with this view. At issue in that reform were three legal concerns: definition of the crime, penalty structure, and corroboration or proof of the crime's existence. A central change in the new code is that of female consent/nonconsent. In the reformed code, the force of legal argument is

removed from issues revolving around the woman's consent or nonconsent. Rather, at stake is a different central issue, that of the actor's (rapist's) use of force or coerciveness.

A concomitant change in social thinking lies in the issue of victim resistance in a rape situation. One aspect of this change is evidenced in the format of debate about victim resistance. Unlike resistance preoccupation in victim precipitation research, feminist preoccupation with victim resistance research has arisen from women's interest in studying rape avoidance. Once it was clear from demographic research studies that some women identified themselves as rape avoiders, feminist researchers began to seek common denominators in their experiences.

Recent research indicates the usefulness of resistance even as it recognizes that resistance will not stop every rapist from completing a rape assault (Queen's Bench Foundation, 1976a; 1976b; Bart, 1981; Bart & O'Brien, 1985; McIntyre, 1980; Sanders, 1980).

Early studies of rape avoidance in San Francisco (Queen's Bench Foundation, 1976a; 1976b) indicated that women who used both physical and verbal resistance were more likely to avoid rape. In addition, women who avoided rape were women who immediately resisted and were determined to avoid rape at any cost.



W. B. Sanders (1980) analyzed the role of reframing in rape avoidance. When the victim refuses to accept the assailant's framing of an attempted assault, she resists him. Sanders believes that her initial decision not to be raped allows her to enter the interaction as a potential controller of the situation. Aggressive physical resistance signals to the assailant that she refuses to accept his intentions. Doing nothing in an assault situation, according to Sanders, increases the likelihood of rape actually happening to the woman.

J. J. McIntyre's (1980) Washington, D.C. research indicated that women who avoided rape were women who resisted early in the attack and who used aggressive resistance behaviors (running, screaming, verbal aggression, physical fighting). Again, as in Sanders' study, initial hesitation increased a woman's likelihood of completed rape.

P. Bart's and P. H. O'Brien's (1985) research identified women who successfully avoided rape in a sexual assault situation. Rape-avoiding women were those women who actively resisted by running away, using weapons, or making active physical attacks on the person of the rapist. Their work indicates that multiple strategies are more effective than reliance

upon any one strategy. Crying and pleading, in their work, is demonstrably ineffective for rape avoidance.

There is anecdotal evidence to support the effectiveness of reframing in some situations. Although a woman's smaller size, with its smaller muscle mass, is usually perceived as creating a significant disadvantage to women in a rape situation, women have successfully resisted rape by claiming the tactical offensive position in an assault encounter. Bart and O'Brien claim in their study there was no relationship between an assailant's perceived size and successful rape avoidance (1985, p. 23).

In E. Culpepper's doctoral dissertation (1983) she relates a personal experience of rape resistance by claiming women's fury, women's Medusa-Gorgon face. Culpepper describes screaming and physically forcing the man out of her house. She writes, " It is over in a flash. I still see his eyes, stunned, wide and staring, almost quizzically, at me, as if I am acting strange as if I were acting wrong" [emphasis hers] (p. 270). It is interesting to note that Culpepper's description of a past event is mostly stated in the present tense. Although she successfully avoided rape by physical and verbal aggressiveness, memory elements remain in the present to her, at least in her linguistic recall of the event.

This anecdote illustrates Bart's and O'Brien's contention that women who avoid rape are more determined to avoid rape than they are afraid of death (1985, pp. 29, 52-53). Their book ends with the statement, "Rape and the fear of rape are stones in our pockets. We hope, through this research, to empty them so we can swim" (1985, p. 126).

The 1970s were a decade of change in social opinions about rape. Consideration of the legal rights of the victim began to take precedence over consideration of victim precipitation in public opinion, as well as in legal code definitions. In addition, the social sciences, guided by feminist theory, began to study rape from a woman's perspective.

#### Rape Research and Observers' Beliefs in a Just World

One of the conceptual worldviews which interests social scientists who are interested in rape research is that identified by M. J. Lerner (1965) and by Lerner and C. H. Simmons (1966) as just world theory. Lerner hypothesized that a commonly shared cultural assumption was that the world is a just place. In a just world people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. The world is seen as fair. People in a victim status are seen by others, and perhaps by themselves, as

earning or deserving their condition in some way. The outcome of social events are used by individuals to interpret their observations about the world.

In an attempt to maintain cognitive consonance, people strive to find an appropriate fit between what they do and what happens to them as a consequence of their actions. Likewise, they seek to find a fit between others' behaviors and consequences. When outcomes indicate victimization and suffering, observers and victims alike search for reasons. When requirements for a just world attitude are not met and are not readily apparent, observers and victims assign causality, blame, or responsibility to the victim.

One way in which psychologists examine the search for causal explanations is to conduct attribution research. Attribution theories describe the process(es) by which humans explain a person's behavior. In creating explanations, they attribute the behavior to situational factors or to some inferred dispositional qualities of the person. In some situations environmental factors and personal qualities may both be included in making attributions (Gleitman, 1986, p. 31).

E. Walster (1966) described responsibility attributions following severe accidents. As outcome consequences of an accident became more severe, people

became motivated to assign blame to someone as responsible. "If causality is assigned to an unpredictable, uncontrollable set of circumstances, individuals are forced to concede that such an event might happen to them" (p. 352). Therefore, people assign causal blame to persuade themselves that they will, in the future, be able to avoid such disasters for themselves. Observers, therefore, place causal blame with the victim. The victim, also, in an effort to regain a positive self-view blames modifiable factors in her decisions, those which are most available to her self-control. Attributions would rarely be made by either to chance since it is the most, "elusive and uncontrollable of factors" (p. 352).

K. G. Shaver's work (1970) indicated that people assign causality in order to maintain or enhance self-esteem. By assigning causal attribution to victims, observers appear to believe that they can avoid similar situations.

R. Sumpton and M. Gregson (1981) identify attribution bias or error as a critical factor in attribution research. Attribution bias, or attribution error, represents a human tendency to perceive themselves and others as causal agents. Attribution error results from the general human tendency to underestimate the importance of environmental influence

in causing personal behaviors. While observers frequently make attributions to the personal disposition, personality or motivation of the subject, the actors more frequently make situational attributions.

In 1973, C. Jones and E. A. Aronson worked on responsibility attributions in rape situations. They used the Lerner (1965) and Lerner and Simmons (1966) paradigm of a just world to analyze their findings. Utilizing a study methodology of written vignettes with variables written into the vignettes, they found that respectable women are believed to be more behaviorally responsible for their own rape than are less respectable women. Since in a just world people get what they deserve, it is less possible for observers to fault the character of a respectable woman. Instead, they fault her behavior. Because she characterologically did not deserve to be raped, something in her behavior must have been at fault. In addition, the researchers found that the more severe the consequences of the rape, the greater is the demonstrated need of observers to attribute behavioral blame to the victim. In essence the observer's questions about the victim's sufferings are answered by making the victim herself the responsible actor. In

this way, observers attempt to alter the cognitive dissonance created by bad things (rape) happening to good people.

L. G. Calhoun, A. Cann, J. W. Selby and D. L. Magee (1981) describe research in which the victim's emotionality immediately following rape was used in observer's judgments about whether rape had actually occurred. Emotional expressiveness and emotional control were the variables studied by either written vignettes or by videotapes. With both media forms, the emotionally expressive victim was rated by subjects as suffering more, and therefore, as more credible. In the videotape study the controlled victim was liked less and was judged as less aversive to the rape event.

The authors speculate upon the consequences of engaging in situational behavior which is judged by others as inappropriate. They identify social rejection and diminished credibility in the eyes of others. In addition, an increased attribution of causal responsibility for the victimization is likely to be expressed. Thus, the non-expressive victim was judged as more causally responsible for her fate. The victim with emotional control violates an informal code: observers expect that rape will create an aftermath in which agitated behaviors are appropriate.

Expected to be upset, her apparent calmness signals doubt to observers. When she does not demonstrate her distress in a visible manner to others, she loses believability. Her behavior, noncongruent with the expectations of others, causes her to be judged more harshly. She is seen as consenting to sexual acts or as being responsible for her own assault.

J. Krulewitz (1982) examined the issue of emotional response to rape. Acknowledging that many therapists look to the woman's causal role and to her emotionality after assault to make a judgment about her motives and to assess her degree of suffering, Krulewitz found that the type of emotional display after rape is more a function of the victim's personality type or style than it is of post-rape stress. Finding, in this study, a longer recovery period post-rape for women whose immediate post-rape behavior appeared calm, she asks therapists to recognize that the quiet, apparently calm victim may be more disabled than her more emotive fellow victim.

S. Kanekar and various associates in a number of cross-cultural research studies (1977, 1980, 1981, 1983, 1985) conclude:

The moral responsibility of a rape victim appears to be involved in measures of blame and fault attributed to her for her own rape,



while her causal responsibility has been operationally represented by the measure of perceived likelihood of rape as a function of her attributes. [For example, virginity.] (1983, p. 147)

A gender difference is visible in Kanekar's studies. Male subjects directly attributed provocativeness as affecting the woman's responsibility for the rape event to a greater degree than did female subjects.

H. S. Field (1978) identifies three domains of rape (act, victim, and rapist) and three myths (all women want to be raped; women falsely accuse men of rape; women provoke men to rape by their appearance). In his study he states that rape attitudes are multidimensional constructs. Observers are often reluctant to believe that victims are blameless in a rape situation. Field believes this is a self-protecting maneuver that protects observers from helpless feelings caused by their worries about being vulnerable to a similar attack.

In addition, when assailants are not available, observers seek causation in the victims. When the assailant is available but meets the observer's perception of personal normalcy, the victim is judged as blameworthy. The victim is judged when the observer

is threatened, when there is no assailant to blame, and when the identified assailant appears to be a normal human being.

Discussing the concept of raped victims as used property, and therefore as inherently less valuable, Field comments that a victim without bodily injury is seen as consenting whereas a victim with injuries is seen as refraining from consent. He comments:

Person-oriented crimes take on a game like quality to people. The more rape is seen as a confrontation between equals, the greater the stigma attached to the loser/victim. The greater the equality, the greater the perceived responsibility of victim for offense. (p. 175)

However, R. M. Sorentino and R. G. Boutilier (1974) utilized a college population to study the effects of victim similarity and dissimilarity to research subjects. Their findings indicate that observers devalue victims when they do not share a common fate, but that observers are drawn to the victim when they do. They state, "All the world loathes a loser, except other losers" (p. 93).

In research with student nurses, C. S. Alexander (1980) studied nurses and their perceptions of rape victims. She found a reciprocal relationship of nurse perceptions and contextual issues present in the rape event. Nurses made perceptual judgments of rape victims based upon their assessment of respectability

or disrespectability. Indicators of disrespectability were clothing styles such as shorts or halter tops, prior acquaintance with assailant, divorced marital status, and the victim's failure to resist. Nurses attributed more responsibility to the victim for her own attack if she was perceived as disrespected, and attributed more responsibility to the assailant if the woman was perceived as respectable.

However, the nurse's own personal characteristics and her pre-existing values and expectation set were identified as more important factors in predicting blame attribution among these nurses than were characteristics of the rapist, the victim or circumstances of the assault. Relevant factors were the nurse's knowledge (direct, professional contact with many or few rapes), the nurse's personal assessment of self-vulnerability, the nurse's character style, and the nurse's own locus of control. When the nurse had known many victims; when she saw herself as vulnerable to attack; when she maintained a legalistic approach to rules; and when she strongly believed in her own ability to control her own fate; she more harshly evaluated a victim's responsibility for the assault.

Differentiating between fault and responsibility in their study of college age women, S. R. Pollak and

J. M. Davies (1982) found that college women assigned more fault (blame or moral responsibility) to women who failed to take precautions against rape than they did to the rapist. Most responsibility (a causal judgment about behavior) was assigned to the woman who failed to take precautions against rape in situations identified as premeditated assault by the assailant. In assigning fault, college women used information about the victim. In assigning responsibility college women used information about both the victim and the rapist.

In their study of rape attributions, J. Krulewitz and E. J. Payne (1978) examined the effects of rapist force, observer's gender and sex-role attitudes. In their findings all three factors influenced responsibility attributions. When high amounts of coercion were used by the rapist, observers were more sure rape had occurred and more responsibility was attributed to the rapist than to the victim. In their research definitions, traditional sex-role norms tended to reinforce the view that rape was normal male/female behavior in sexual relationships. Within this definition of gender relatedness, the woman is seen as naturally passive, submissive, and fearful about sex while the man is seen as dominant, aggressive, adventuresome, opportunistic and proud of his sexual prowess.

In their 1979 study, J. Krulewitz and J. E. Nash studied attribution processes. They comment,

Attitudes about rape . . . can best be understood within the context of societal sex-role stereotyping . . . the aggressive, rough and dominant behavior of rapists is consistent with the male sex-role stereotype of "masculinity" while the passive, helpless submission of the rape victim is characteristic of the "feminine" role. (p. 558)

One outcome of rape is the cultural belief that the victim now fails to represent the female role demand of virginity, purity and chastity. In vignettes where women successfully fought off their assailants, more severe attribution of responsibility was assigned to the rapist. The assailant was seen as more responsible for his rape attempt when it failed than when it succeeded. When the assault succeeded and rape was completed, more responsibility was attributed to the woman. Krulewitz and Nash believe that the rapist's success raises questions in observers about the woman's actual wishes for this event.

These research findings are troubling ones. Even when the researchers told the subjects that a rape had occurred in the vignette, many subjects were not sure that one had actually occurred. Women in the vignettes who did not offer direct, obvious physical resistance were less likely to be seen as raped. The observers seemingly required the woman to physically resist even

in situations of violent and dangerous coercion. Thus, rape victims in this study were held partially responsible for being raped while situations of incomplete assault held the assailant more responsible. The rapist was most harshly judged as responsible for an act of violence when he failed to complete it, and the woman was held more responsible when the assailant completed the rape.

In this same study women observers attributed less intelligence and more responsibility to the woman victim of rape if she physically resisted her assailant. Men attributed more intelligence and less responsibility if she resisted. Krulewitz and Nash summarize these confusing findings.

Males may view a resisting woman who is raped as hurt in spite of her resistance while women blame [a] resisting victim because she resisted [emphasis theirs].  
(p. 570)

According to the researchers women observers are faced with a dilemma. By the psychological processes of identification with the victim, they must hold to the belief that what happened to her was not a random event. And they must also identify what exactly caused this event so that they may avoid rape in their own future. Therefore, women subjects scrutinize the victim's behaviors in search of rape avoidance clues because to hold the victim responsible for the assault

is to imply to oneself that potential control over similar situations is possible in one's own life. Women observers are caught in the bind created by sex-role expectations of submissive passivity and by rape outcome thinking in which aggressive resistance is essential to avoid judgment by others as a willing, consenting participant. Krulewitz and Nash summarize:

Finally, when a victim adopts any particular strategy, but is unable to prevent the completion of sexual assault, the present findings indicate that her own and other's perceptions of her will be affected not only by the strategy chosen but by the outcome itself. Rape attributions are made after the fact. Expected effective strategies before an assault may differ considerably from perceived or expected strategies in retrospect. . . . people will evaluate a situation in a manner consistent with their own belief systems. In a real sense, the perceptions of the victim by others can affect her further experiences after the assault. (p. 572)

The legitimate victim is the "really raped" victim in the victim's own self-perception and even more so in the perceptions of others. The victim who "deserved it" or who "wasn't really raped" will likely be further victimized by others because of these pre-existing perceptual fields vis-a-vis the question, "What is it that constitutes a real rape?"

J. Karuza and T. O. Carey (1984) used a research protocol with videotaped vignettes. Subject-observers blamed the victims in two modes: behaviorally and characterologically. When the victim's behaviors were

seen as prudent, character blaming was done. When the victim's behaviors were seen as imprudent, behavior blaming was done. Karuza and Carey conclude that blaming strategies preserved, within the observers, a sense of invulnerability, assisted them to maintain self-esteem, and allowed them to believe in a just, orderly, and meaningful world.

#### Attractiveness Research and Rape Attribution

Attractiveness research presents confusing and contradictory findings. B. Thornton (1977) found no relationship of attractiveness to judgments about provocation. Victim credibility was not affected by attractiveness. However, in sentencing decisions, once the assailant was judged responsible for the assault, attractiveness in victims correlated with longer assailant sentences.

L. G. Calhoun, J. W. Selby, A. Cann and G. T. Keller (1978) found, however, that attractiveness and responsibility were correlated. In their study, attractive rape victims were judged more responsible for their attack.

C. Seligman, J. Brickman, and D. Koulack (1977) found that attractiveness of the victim did make a difference in observer judgments. Unattractive women



were judged to have behaviorally provoked rape in some manner while attractive women were judged to have provoked the attack by virtue of the personal characteristic of beauty. Since no man would want to rape an ugly woman, in the observer-subjects perceptions, she was believed to have acted in a provocative manner. However, in the observer-subjects perceptions, since many men would want to rape a beautiful woman, her beauty alone was sufficient to trigger the attack.

J. B. Best and H. S. Demmin (1982) created four written vignettes to test attractiveness and blameworthiness for a rape event. When the victim's behavior was held constant in the vignettes, attractiveness did not affect the responsibility judgments of the subjects. However, when explicit descriptions of victim behavior were not given, attractiveness was used to assign provocation to attractive victims. Rapists, however, were not equally blamed. Those who raped provocative victims were blamed less than those who raped unprovocative victims. The authors conclude, "People do not tend to regard the occurrence of rape as "situationally given" (given the circumstances, this was bound to happen). Rather, people are able and willing to assume that the occurrence of rape is "personally driven" (somebody is

more at fault and therefore, more to blame for this)" (p. 257).

In 1983, M. B. Jacobson and P. M. Popovich designed a vignette-photo study in which cross-purposes stereotypes were studied. The first of these is that beautiful is good and better than ugly. Therefore, ugly women are responsible when they are raped. The second is that beautiful women arouse uncontrollable passions in men and, therefore, are responsible when they are raped.

The researchers report that beautiful women were believed to be partially responsible for rape attacks against them. The less certain people were about the details of an incident, the more heavily they weighed the attractiveness of the victim when making judgements. Thus, in judgments made by these observers, beautiful is not good; beautiful is raped and beautiful is responsible for rape when it happens to her. The woman's great beauty was used to excuse the rapist.

In addition, women judged as ugly were also judged as responsible. The researchers noted behavioral blame with ugly women. Too ugly and observers ask, "Who

would want to rape you? You must have asked for it by your behavior." The woman's ugliness was used to excuse the rapist.

In these findings women who are raped are in an ambiguous situation. Neither beauty nor ugliness relieved the woman of her own responsibility for being raped. In either situation, the rapist was likely to be excused.

#### Motivation Research and Rape Attribution

M. R. Burt (1980) raised the question of rape myth acceptance. Defining rape myths as false beliefs about rape (for example, only bad girls get raped), M. R. Burt and R. S. Albin (1981) studied sexual conservatism (judgments about appropriate sexual behavior), adversarial sex role beliefs (sexual relationships are fundamentally and essentially exploitive), and acceptance of interpersonal violence (force and coercion are legitimate ways to gain compliance from others). Three factors emerged as rape supportive: acceptance of rape myths; adversarial gender relations beliefs and acceptance of personal violence.

They found that belief in rape myths led observers to question the reality of rape. Even when given the research definition of rape as coerced sexual

intercourse, some of the observers did not think that rape had necessarily happened. Rape myth acceptance went hand in hand with questions about the woman's consent from observers (did the woman want to have sex), attribution questions (what were her personal motives in the event), and character issues (was she respectable).

Burt's and Albin's study (1981) found that acceptance of interpersonal violence was the strongest predictor of rape myth acceptance. The researchers write:

If sex-role stereotyping is the precondition for targeting women as a potential sexual victim, acceptance of interpersonal violence may be the attitudinal releaser of assaultive action. Excessive violence has long been a theme in American life: rape is only one of its modes of expression . . . . The combination of pressures of sex-role stereotyping and the psychological availability of violence have helped produce a rate rape that is the highest of any industrialized country. When viewed from that perspective, it appears that the task of preventing rape is tantamount to revamping a significant proportion of our societal values. (p. 229)

A. B. Heilbrun's study (1980) deals with presumed motives in rape perception. Three vectors are used to explain the limited convictions of rapists. These are the issues of victim credibility, assailant responsibility, and the need to decide if a rape actually occurred. Variables in Heilbrun's studies included rapist age, rapist education levels,

presentation of the act as premeditated, use of psychological or physical force, existence of a prior relationship of assailant and victim, and subject perception of the act as violent or sexual.

His findings suggest that the less discrepancy there is between commonly accepted stereotypes of rape and the reported crime, the greater the credibility attributed to the victim's report. The way that people conceive of rape is affected significantly by their attribution of motives to the rapist. A pre-existing rape stereotype yields bias in making attributions. Heilbrun uses the theory of cognitive dissonance to explain these findings. When an individual is made uncomfortable by perceptions which challenge pre-existing beliefs, they attempt to bring discrepant cognitions into harmony. A pre-existent rape stereotype is called into dissonance when the reported actual rape does not conform to the stereotype. To restore cognitive consistency, the observers call the victim's credibility into question.

#### Rape Research and Victim's Beliefs in a Just World

G. L. Griffiths (1985) identifies issues which preoccupy rape victims during a rape event and immediately after the event is over. During the event,

victims must deal with their assessment of the life-threatening nature of the particular rape episode in which they are trapped. Many women experience terror, which is induced by a variety of assailant actions. Some women cope with this by entering a "terror induced pseudo-calm" in which shock and disbelief are their primary reactions. During the reaction of pseudo-calm, the victim experiences distorted and heightened perceptions thinking as she attempts to direct her own behavior towards self-preservation. Many victims control their inner panic by focusing on small details, attempting to recall advice from others about what to do in a rape situation or recalling their own survival behaviors in other situations of interpersonal violence. Griffiths comments that while frozen fright appears like consent to the rapist and perhaps, after the fact, to others, it is really a form of compliance used by the woman to stay alive and to survive.

R. Janoff-Bulman and C. Wortman (1977) studied coping ability in paraplegics who had been disabled in accidents. This particular study is of great importance to rape research literature because Janoff-Bulman moved from this study to a series of studies with rape victims in which she utilized research protocols developed in this early study. Applying Lerner's just world theory to paraplegics, the

researchers concluded that self-blaming was a good predictor of good coping while other-blaming was a good predictor of poor coping. While observers in the just world theory blame and derogate others in order to preserve their belief that people get what they deserve, victims likewise engage in self-blame and self-derogation in order to preserve their own just world beliefs.

Their research about accidents causing paraplegia is provocative today for women seeking to understand women's responses after rape. Individuals who blamed others for their accident and who were engaged in the search for revenge or justice had the fewest coping abilities in the accident's aftermath. Victims who were injured in the course of self-chosen, enjoyable leisure activity in which risks had been accepted--before the accident, as part of the action--were coping the best. As part of their discussions of the accidents, they blamed themselves. Of this phenomenon, the researchers write:

The person who coped the best was the one who saw the accident as following logically and inevitably from a freely chosen behavior. Apparently the ability to perceive an orderly relationship between one's behaviors and one's outcomes is important for effective coping. This concern is consistent with a need for control . . . . However, it is our feeling that the data may be more indicative of a need for an orderly and meaningful world than for a controllable one. (p. 362)

They conclude that the need to search for the meaning of an accident is a salient victim reaction to an event of victimization. They identify several forms of sense-making which emerged from victims in this study: predetermination, probability, chance, God's own reasons, deservedness, Devil's interference to make God do wrong, re-evaluation of the event as positive (a test to teach personal courage).

Of this need to seek meaning, the researchers state, "What may be important is ascribing meaning to the accident in a manner that proves satisfying to the individual victim" (p. 358). In addition, the researchers note that after the event of victimization has occurred, the victims likely have a distorted view of their own causal powers. Failing to find an immediate cause for their suffering they may seek through their life story for any prior causation.

By 1979, R. Janoff-Bulman began a series of studies with rape victims. In this research she describes two kinds of self-blaming done by victims: behavior self-blame and character self-blame. While self-blaming has puzzled women in the anti-rape movement and clinicians in therapy situations, the



Janoff-Bulman studies indicate that not all self-blaming indicates poor coping. In this particular study attribution is the critical issue.

When rape victims engage in character self-blaming (I always was a poor judge of men's personalities), self-blaming is maladaptive. However, behavioral self-blaming (I should not have left the car door open) is frequently adaptive. Janoff-Bulman analyzes this differentiated fault attribution process in the following manner.

The woman who judges her character as deficient and as the causal precipitant in the rape event, evaluates and criticizes her own self-identity. This harsh self-criticism tends to lower self-esteem. By placing the locus of attribution in her character, she establishes the future as one in which her own behaviors offer little hope of personal control. By making a character attribution, she limits her options in the self-creation of her own future.

On the other hand, women who blame their own behaviors rather than their character are searching to see how they got into a rape vulnerable situation. If a woman can determine ways in which she shares responsibility with the rapist, she can gain some future control over similar events. She is then able to reason that the event was not totally arbitrary,

chaotic, or random. This enables her, in future situations, to exercise more self-control. This is then effort attribution. If only her behaviors need to change, the woman can regain personal security.

Since behavioral self-blame appears to be functional for rape victims while character self-blame appears dysfunctional, Janoff-Bulman advises crisis center workers and therapists to intervene very slowly and deliberately. Behavioral self-blame does not represent masochistic struggles of the woman, but rather represents her efforts to regain self-control. Suggesting to a behaviorally self-blaming woman that there was nothing she could have done to control her previous rape may, in fact, be countertherapeutic for her future coping skills and health.

Again examining the types of blaming, Janoff-Bulman (1982) examined self-esteem factors also. The victim who cites a pre-rape behavior which can be altered is attempting to regain self-control. Post-rape victims who demonstrated high self-esteem levels also demonstrated high levels of behavioral self-blaming. Victims with low self-esteem levels demonstrated characterological self-blaming. However, when she examined observer-subjects, high self-esteem observers demonstrated both character and behavioral blaming of victims.

Janoff-Bulman believes two phenomena are at work in these findings. For victims, the issue is regaining self-control once a sense of personal invulnerability has been shattered by a rape event. However, for observers the issue is maintaining a sense of personal invulnerability. This maintenance is accomplished by victim blaming. Victimization threatens the victim and the observer, albeit in different ways, and it creates victim blaming. However, it is very likely that the motivation for self-blaming in victims and for other-blaming in observers stem from two very different motivations.

R. Janoff-Bulman and I. H. Frieze (1983) developed a theoretical perspective within which to understand the victim's psychological reactions to victimization. Disruptive, negative life events are understood to create the necessity for life change, for rebuilding an "assumptive world" (pp. 1-2). Basic assumptions, held by the woman pre-rape, have been shattered during the rape event and its aftermath. These assumptions include the woman's personal belief in her own invulnerability, her perception of the world as an orderly, meaningful place, and her self-view of personal control of her own world.

The psychological response to assumption shattering is shock, confusion, helplessness, terror,

fear, anxiety, and emotional numbing. The author reminds the reader that the severity of these symptoms should remind everyone of the suffering and distress which the victim endures. The victim's life patterns of cognitive arrangements have been disrupted. Her post-rape world is now very different from her pre-rape world. It is marked by threats, dangers and self-questioning. The loss of a conceptual system developed by the woman throughout her life means the loss of her guiding system. Her previous guiding system has been shattered, along with the shattering of her assumptive worldview. She no longer has a guiding system with a viable set of expectations about human behavior.

By 1985, R. Janoff-Bulman and C. Timko more closely studied victim blaming by self and others. Discussing hindsight thinking, they conclude that, in retrospect, people know what to avoid. When observers blame the rape victim, they forget that prior to the event of victimization no one knew the outcome. Therefore, the victim acted without outcome knowledge. "Victims must make decisions based not on hindsight but on foresight" (p. 163). Thus, to understand the victim's perceptions of her own victimization, it becomes important to understand the event in its own context rather than in the outcome context of hindsight.

The researchers ask if victim self-blame is a form of hindsight thinking that reflects an inherent survivor cognitive bias that must be acknowledged by rape center volunteers and clinicians. They state:

The relatively "automatic" nature of the hindsight effect augers poorly for victims in terms of what they can expect from others. It is also possible that victims themselves use outcome knowledge in reacting to their own victimization. Certainly, while acting and making decisions before the victimization the future victim operates in the absence of outcome knowledge. However, following the victimization, victims may react to their own circumstances by overestimating the predictability of their own victimization, thereby engaging in an unwarranted degree of self-blame. (Janoff-Bulman & Timko, 1985, p. 176)

D. T. Miller and C. A. Porter (1983) studied self-blame in victims of violence. They identify three types of self-blame. First, there is blame for causing the violence; secondly, there is blame for not modifying it; and thirdly, there is blame for tolerating it.

Individuals can blame themselves as being the cause of violence or as being the occasion for violence or as having blameworthy personal characteristics. Commenting on their "counter-intuitive" findings, the researchers note that victims often exaggerate the extent to which they are responsible for their own fate. Miller and Porter also, like Janoff-Bulman and

associates, recognize the positive correlation of behavioral self-blaming with coping abilities after an episode of experienced violence.

According to the authors, several possibilities exist to explain their findings. The victim has perhaps internalized, by psychological processes, the external society and its negative responses to victims. Or perhaps the victim is attempting to regain and again maintain control of her life. It is possible that she is operationalizing just world thinking. Finally it is possible that the victim is seeking to impose meaning on the non-comprehensible. The authors state their belief that any given event of victimization can activate a variety of causal questions and needs for meaning. The distinction between the event and effects of the event is needed in any given examination of victim self-blaming activities.

Causal questions, for example, can lie in negative outcomes. The question, "Why did I fail to notice I was in danger?" is one such question. Causal questions can ask about the timing of victimization, for example, the question, "Why did I get raped tonight when I've never been raped before?" Causal questions can raise comparisons with others as when a woman asks, "Why me and why not her?"

Reminding the reader that the unique saliency of the causal question for the victim can also function as a clue to the observer about unresolved issues in the woman's thinking about her victimization, the authors reiterate two fundamental questions of victims: "Why did violence occur?" and "Why did violence occur to me?"

### Conclusions

Social science research is grounded in empirical observation and experiments. Of this process L. Birke (1986) writes,

Scientific method . . . proceeds by a process of isolating variable for experimental manipulation, while holding all other known variables constant or randomised. This allows science to proceed by logical sequential steps, . . . testing hypothesis after hypothesis. (p. 146)

Raising the issue of knowing versus proving, Birke discusses S. Gearhart's concern that Western science has moved toward a priority of proving and justifying and has moved away from discovering, revealing and knowing. Thus, women in consciousness-raising groups might discover and thereby know much about rape and its aftermath in women's lives. However, their knowledge would not be accepted as scientific knowledge. Because

of the absence of an objective observer, their knowing would be held to be idiosyncratic and subjective.

The scientific community indicates in its complexity that common-sense wisdom about rape and responses to rape's victims may be false wisdom. Efforts made by women who have been raped to understand the necessary processes of recovery include their own subjective attempts at sense-making after an event of sexual violence.

In the research situation they are faced with the responses of others to their victimization. Various concepts, sometimes contradictory in values, may be utilized to explain the event of rape in a woman's life. Social science research reminds the student of rape events and women's recovery that twenty years of self-study from a woman's perspective has only just begun to explicate new understandings of the women's response to her own rape event. Likewise, observers' responses are just beginning to be researched and scientific understandings developed.

Both the subjective and the scientific approaches are needed to provide different personal and cultural understandings of rape's psychic and physical costs to the woman and her social networks. Social science research has been most helpful in its descriptive function. Researchers have begun to examine rape



within a variety of social science paradigms. Counter-intuitive findings in a variety of areas provide a fertile ground for considering the dynamics of a woman's recovery from new perspectives.

## Chapter 4

### The Clinical Sciences and Rape Research

They will not be able to remember  
together who they are . . . . And  
so . . . will begin to do the opposite  
of re-membering . . . dismembering  
when there is no re-membering.

Corita Kent  
Footnotes and Headlines

#### Introduction

Prior to the 1970s, clinical literature either ignored the victim of rape or contained strong biases against women who sought medical or psychological help after rape. Of this early period, L. L. Holmstrom and A. W. Burgess (1978) write, "The scholarly literature on sexual offenses was voluminous, but it had overlooked the victim" (p. 2). The work of Holmstrom and Burgess has been one factor in generating clinical interest in the victim of rape. In their 1978 book they write of the impact of consciousness-raising groups upon their decision to study the victim of rape.

She [Holmstrom] remembered having heard many reports by women at consciousness-raising groups in the late 1960s about physical assaults that had been made upon them by men. And yet, it seemed that despite its common occurrence and its apparently strong impact on the people involved, that, researchers seldom picked up on this assaultive behavior as a research topic. (p. 5)

By the mid-1970s, victimology, crisis intervention and psychotherapy literature began to show changes. Rape victims were increasingly seen as sharing the fate of other victims of crimes and assaults. There was new knowledge of the fate of hostages after their release from captivity. In addition, there was an emerging awareness of psychological sequellae within European holocaust survivors. New comparisons were made with victims of armed robbery and other violent crimes. Researchers and clinicians understood the rape survivor in new ways. Three models of understanding came into play: a crisis intervention model, a post-traumatic stress model and an adapted loss and grief model. Eventually, the American Psychiatric Association (1980) developed the diagnostic category, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), to describe a variety of stress responses after crisis. This diagnostic category built upon clinical understandings of combat stress developed during World War II. The soldier who was diagnosed with an acute reactive neurosis was seen as reacting to warfare connected stress (Saul & Lyons, 1961, p. 108). When PTSD was created as a diagnostic category, it replaced the older diagnosis. PTSD is used to describe post-war reactions in veterans as well as those of sexual violence survivors. The diagnosis

of PTSD essentially focuses on the adaptation of the individual following exposure to acute or prolonged psychic stress.

In the chapter which follows, each of the above categories in clinical research will be described. The relationship of crisis intervention theory, loss and grief theory, and post-traumatic stress theory to rape will be explored.

### Stage Theories: A Conceptual Model

Stage theories have been used to describe psychological phenomena related to recovery from rape. The stages of dying, grief, and loss (E. Kubler-Ross, 1969), the stages of stress reactions (H. Selye, 1956), and the stages of recovery from crisis (G. Caplan, 1961, 1964) are each utilized to examine women's recovery from sexual assault. It is helpful, then, to examine stage theories as a specific genre of theory.

Stage theories accept Western cultural presuppositions about the movement of time throughout history in a linear pattern. An end point in the movement of an individual through the stage sequence is usually presumed. Stage theories generally move from left to right in either a directly horizontal or upward-moving diagonal pattern. Throughout the linear

movement from past to future, distinguishable historical or developmental segments (phases, stages, or periods) emerge and are visible to the observer. Stage theories are essentially progressive, moving always towards or into the future. Because of their progressive nature, they are concerned more with processes of change and less with constancy. Constancy most often carries a negative valence of stagnation, fixation, or cessation of movement forward.

According to R. Kastenbaum (1975), stage theories are "characterized by emphasis upon qualitative differences that are thought to appear in a relatively fixed sequence. Change along a simple quantitative dimension is usually not regarded as the stuff of stage theory" (Kastenbaum. p. 37). Stage theory progressions involve three possible and interactive variables: structures (what changes), motivations (why changes occur) and processes (how changes occur).

Stages within stage theory are essentially chronological. Stage changes can be slow, orderly and nearly imperceptible, or rapid, perhaps chaotic and very visible. When stages are seen as necessarily sequential, the progression of stages is fixed, universal, and unvarying in order. No stage can arise either out of its time or out of its sequence. Each

stage ideally occupies a time of preeminence. As stage succeeds stage, a predictable trajectory is established and enacted.

Stage theories assume a single primary path of movement. While variations are recognized, they are seen as deviations from the acceptable central mode of progression (Kastenbaum, p. 45). Stage theories, therefore, perpetuate a universal, one-path model as the desired or expected patterning of human response. They define deviation from this central mode of progression as less than desirable. Kastenbaum comments upon the particular problem that stage theorists fail to distinguish adequately between the descriptive function of stage theory (identification of what usually happens as one observes) and the prescriptive one (a judgment about what should happen).

Stage theories, by their progressive nature, imply that a valued destination is ahead, that change is desired, that movement toward the end point of resolution is the desired and necessary action, and that stagnation represents failure in some manner. These are models which value growth and expansion by expenditures of energy. The value of descriptive research and the formulation of stages is moderated by the dangers of prescriptive valuing in human responses to life events.

Stage theorists frequently recognize a complex interrelatedness of individual, culture, relationships and environment. However, the universal nature of stage theory expectations establishes one primary and desired response pattern within this interrelatedness. In descriptions of a forward-moving, optimistic, progressive, and discretely (occasionally rigidly) structured set of stages, well-being or wellness becomes defined as a singular path. Deviance from this singular path becomes negatively valued as pathology.

Crisis theory and clinical models for assisting clients with crisis have often drawn upon stage theory models to describe client's response pattern to crisis. Therefore, most early descriptions of victim responses after rape have utilized stage theory models.

### Crisis Theory

The concept of crisis, according to K. F. Riegel (1975) is "antithetically connected with those of equilibrium, stability, consonance, and balance" (p. 100). Among physicians and nurses, the word homeostasis is also used to describe a condition of physiological or psychological balance. In this conceptual model of crisis, disequilibrium represents an interference to a state of stability.

Reigel argues from a developmentalist perspective that crisis need not carry a negative valence. Rather, crisis is a contrastive state to stability and is in an interdependent relationship with it. Crisis then occupies a dialectical relationship with equilibrium. It is by the dialectical relationship of the contradictory states of stability and crisis that growth occurs (p. 100). When the contradictions can be resolved, personal growth towards a new or different equilibrium is set in motion. The contradictions provide individuals with the opportunity for innovative and creative approaches to life. Riegel believes, "such contradictions, questions, and inner dialogues represent the very basis of his (sic) actions and thoughts" (p. 101).

Riegel examines two models of scientific development: the "continuous accumulative growth model" in which a crisis is an "offensive disturbance" and a model of "progression" in which crisis provokes or stimulates advancement. While a human crisis caused by a discrete event is different from developmental progression, it is perhaps useful to consider a personal crisis in a similar manner.

A personal crisis, triggered by an external or internal event, can cause a growth disturbance in the individual or it can provoke growth. Catastrophic



crises for the individual result from severe dissonance somewhere in the person's life. Catastrophic crises are those crises in which the individual must make adaptive moves to regain, restore, recreate that which was; or to create, devise, develop that which will be. A catastrophic crisis in the present moment involves the individual's assessment of that which has been, as well as containing estimations of that which can be or should be in the future. A catastrophic crisis, by its nature in human life, calls for the individual to make adaptive movement in some way to regain a past balance or to create a new balance. Crisis intervention models developed within the health professions to assist individuals troubled by the aftermaths of personal or communal crisis.

### Crisis Intervention Theory

Crisis intervention theory was a natural outgrowth of the community mental health centers movement and brief psychotherapies models which emerged in the United States during the 1960s (D. C. Aguilera & J. M. Messick, 1974). During that decade, brief psychotherapies developed and were oriented towards the removal or alleviation of symptoms rather than towards personality reconstruction. It was widely believed

that brief therapy was especially useful for primary prevention. It was also utilized to minimize secondary gain effects of long-term therapy in working with chronically ill individuals (L. Bellak, 1971).

Crisis intervention therapy is oriented towards psychological resolution of an immediate crisis. It is short-term, often intensive therapy, offered to the person in crisis. The primary goal of treatment efforts is to return the individual to pre-crisis levels of psychological coping. The usual definition for a time-limited crisis is assumed to be between four to six weeks (p. 16).

Aguilera and Messick (1974) identify two approaches within crisis intervention literature. The generic approach assumes that certain recognizable patterns of behavior can be seen within certain kinds of crisis. Within this approach, phases or stages can be identified as the individual recovers from a crisis. Treatment measures are designed for members of the identified group of people who are at risk. In contrast, the individual approach focuses upon making individualized interventions for specific individuals with their particularized and idiosyncratic responses to crisis events (pp. 16-19).

Steps in crisis intervention include assessment (accurate description of the precipitating event(s) and

identification of the specific nature of the resultant crisis), diagnosis, and intervention. Once assessment and diagnosis have been done, intervention focuses upon helping the person in crisis to gain some intellectual understanding of her situation. Alternative coping patterns are explored. New ways of understanding the social world are presented. In addition, significant others are included in direct ways to provide additional support to the individual (pp. 19-22).

G. Caplan (1961, 1964), a community psychiatry and crisis theory expert, was interested in prevention of psychiatric disorders rather than in providing secondary or tertiary care to those already disabled. The conceptual model which undergirds his work is that of need-meeting. He states:

Lists of human needs are usually somewhat arbitrary; the main point is the innate needs of the primary biological makeup are continuously modified by interaction with the human and nonhuman environment and these might take into account three main areas, one of needs for exchange of love and affection, another of the need for limitation and control (hence patterns of asserting or submitting to authority), and a third of needs for participation in joint activity, for example in relation to the degree of support or independence in dealing with a task. (1964, p. 32)

Caplan's work, in its recognition of intrapersonal needs, interpersonal needs, and sociocultural needs, accounts for an interaction model of intervention in

crisis situations. The clinician's assessment of the client's needs affect her treatment approaches.

Life crises or life hazards occur and these involve, "sudden loss, . . . the threat of loss, or challenge associated with opportunity . . . accompanied by heightened demands on the individual" (1964, p. 35). In this model, crisis is a time of transition from that which has been usual or routine. It is a time where the opportunity emerges for the personality to mature and grow. But it is also a time of danger in which the possibility for mental disorders may emerge as well. Crisis is inevitably a turning point for the individual who experiences it.

During a crisis event homeostasis is interrupted and homeostatic mechanisms do not work. Solutions previously learned by the individual to solve problems do not work, do not apply, and cannot, therefore, be utilized to return to homeostasis. With the failure of known or attempted solutions, personal disorganization results (1964, pp. 39-40). Caplan (1961) lists general factors which likely will affect the final outcome of a crisis.

[It] will be determined by choices which are made partly actively and partly by chance and by other aspects of the situation. The bodily state of the individual, . . . the purely chance aspects, . . . the availability of external social

resources, and the communication system of the milieu, . . . as well as the personality of the individual. (p. 41)

He asserts that a crisis situation is one in which the person seeks help because of her internal distress. During a crisis, individuals are more susceptible to sociocultural influences from their environment. Assistance from others is actively sought. The individual's susceptibility to external responses, combined with her need for help, may create great vulnerability within the person. Even so called minor interactional influences during the time of high susceptibility may affect the long term resolution of the crisis. The participation of others who are present during the crisis is important because they may influence the individual's choice of coping mechanisms and styles of working towards homeostasis. Once the individual resolves, in some manner or another, the immediate crisis, a new enduring state of homeostasis is reached. This new homeostasis can be functional for the person or highly dysfunctional.

According to Caplan's theory, the individual's psychological tasks include resolution of any fear or anxiety generated by the crisis and anticipatory worry work. Resolving fear (the reaction to present, real danger) and anxiety (the reaction to potential or imaginary danger) are essential. Anticipatory worry

work is the process by which the individual attempts to regain control. The "what next" questions of the individual are directed towards attempting to regain a personal and psychological balance. The individual must deal with any loss and its subsequent depression, with physical or psychological pain, with loneliness, alienation, helplessness and feelings of emptiness. Caplan reminds the reader that this is, in essence, grief work (1964, pp. 33-63).

The crisis of victimization is a specific type of crisis according to S. L. Dixon and R. G. Sands (1983). Victimization interrupts the survivor's sense of self. Accepting a commonly held psychological truism that self-identity holds the key to wholeness, continuity, and purpose within healthy individuals, the authors state that an event of victimization challenges this identity. A crisis event ruptures the person's sense of well-being in the world, the sense of being at home in one's own body, or the sense of knowing the direction of one's life. Awareness of one's personal identity, socio-cultural events of interaction with others, and the individual's particular or existential stance of holding meaning are all disrupted in crisis situations.

There are, according to these two authors, five elemental features of any crisis cycle: a hazardous

event, a vulnerable state within the individual, precipitating factors, active crisis, and reintegration. Within this cycle, Dixon and Sands hypothesize a formula: event plus the individual's perception and interpretation or reaction to the event determine the developmental sequencing of the crisis cycle.

Crisis events of any kind touch the vital center of the individual person and inevitably yield existential concerns about life's purpose, value and meaning. The symbolic meaning of any crisis event assumes a powerful role in the individual's efforts to cope with the sense of non-being created during and after the crisis event (Dixon and Sands, 1983, pp. 223-230).

K. Holmes (1981), in her specific adaptation of crisis theory models for rape victims, recapitulates the central core concept of crisis intervention models. "Crisis is not pathology or illness" (p. 30). Core assumptions of crisis models mandate an awareness of time. People do not remain indefinitely in crisis. The concept of crisis, in and of itself, points always towards a time and place of resolution. For the person in crisis, help needs to be immediate and precisely focused in order to prevent the development of future pathology.

In their 1980 article, M. Bard and D. Sangrey discuss the relationship of stress and crisis. In an event of victimization, individuals experience intense stress. The presence of this intense stress often precipitates a crisis reaction in victims. "The sudden, arbitrary, unpredictable violation of self leaves victims feeling so shattered that they cannot continue to function the way they did before the crime. Things fall apart, and victims are unable to pull themselves back together right away" (p. 28).

Asserting that individuals in a variety of crisis situations (armed robbery, rape, mugging) respond in similar fashions, the authors believe that the severity of the crisis lies in direct proportion to the degree in which the victim's self is violated (p. 29). Additional factors include the symbolic meaning of the event to the victim, other circumstances in the victim's life at the time of the event, and availability as well as the kinds of help from professional helpers, friends, or family. Because a crisis throws people off balance, helpers need to realize that a victim's behavior and feelings make sense to her, even when they may appear dysfunctional to others in the aftermath of victimization. Helpers and others in the victim's environment must remember that the victim is attempting to regain an internal sense of balance.



A victim's experience cannot be reduced to a formula of desired or expected responses. Bard and Sangrey state, "Violation disrupts the self in as many ways as there are victims" (p. 29). However, there are similarities to most crisis reactions. These authors utilize a three stage model: initial disorganization of the self (impact); a time of struggle (recoil); and finally a time of self-readjustment (reorganization). Dividing lines between the stages are blurred and victims may vacillate across all three stages as they work through the effects of victimization on their lives and their relationships.

Throughout the period of impact, immediately after the crime or assault, the victim's sense of personal autonomy, intactness and integrity has been shattered. Victims feel as if they are in shock. They may become numb, disoriented, and disorganized. Often they make aimless motions or experience actual immobility. Feelings of vulnerability, loneliness, and helplessness are common. Psychological disbelief is common. The victim has become involved in a suddenly chaotic and non-predictable world. Victims are frequently confused, have trouble thinking clearly, and have trouble recalling details of the crime. Often they are unable to talk coherently.

The authors detail a common perception in crisis theory: that an individual cannot remain in crisis, defenseless and disorganized, for a long period of time. A victim will recreate a [sensible] world in some way or another. She will reconstruct her defense capacity, helpfully or harmfully. The kinds of responses others make to the victim in this immediate post-victimization time are critical. Bard and Sangrey state:

Really helping a person in trouble requires extraordinary sensitivity and discipline. People who really want to help must focus on the victim, listen carefully for the victim's expression of his or her needs, and then respond to that expression-without imposing their own suggestions or judgments or perceptions." (p. 31)

During the recoil stage of response to a crisis event, victims begin the struggle which will lead them eventually to some form of resolution. The desired outcome is reintegration of their fragmented selves. Two apparently contrary processes are at work here. When victims feel able, they work at resolving strong emotional responses to their victimization. At other times a strong defensive process creates denial. The authors compare this to sleeping and waking, a natural process of struggle and resting. Denying and then facing feelings and then denying them once more allows individuals, in a cyclic fashion, to deal with their victimization. During this time the events of the

crime may be clearly remembered and the feelings may be reexperienced. This is a time of psychic playback in nightmares and daytime reveries. It is also a time of verbalization of the events, of retelling the story of victimization. Eventually individuals may be able to experience the terror of the event as they allow it to be known more intensely than it was originally perceived when danger was present. This allows deep healing to occur but it can also be a time of further disorganization that is destructive to the healing self. During these struggles to regain a nonchaotic and a predictable world, the victim needs sensitive, caring people. The stress for the observer-listener, however, is also documented by Bard and Sangrey.

Given adequate ventilation, these feelings will eventually diminish along with the other intense emotions aroused by the crime. But other people are sometimes so threatened by the victim's fear that they can't listen. The victim's efforts to release the fear by talking about it may terrify the listeners so much that they will cut the victim off to protect themselves. (p. 33)

Another issue is post-victimization rage. In the absence of an identified criminal, the victim has no direct target for her rage and no way to confront him. Fantasied confrontations and revenge dreams are common. For some victims these fantasies are also threatening to self-esteem. "One rape victim had a recurrent fantasy that she would use a huge pair of scissors to

castrate the rapist, a vision that horrified her even as it satisfied her need to express her rage" (p. 33). Some victims turn the rage inward against the self; others turn it outward against others who may be trying to assist them.

In time the violated self will reorganize as the victim assimilates the experience. Intense feelings diminish in their intensity, energy levels return and there is less mental preoccupation with the details of the victimization event. Gradually victims place the event into some form of perspective and return to engagement with their ongoing lives. Victims, in a healthy reengagement, do not forget the crime. Rather, according to Bard and Sangrey, they become reborn as they reorder their lives to a position of greater strength. They accept the permanent alteration of their worldviews and self-identity. They mitigate the most severe limitations of an event of rape and learn to cope in more adaptive ways.

M. Symonds (1980), an expert on victimology and crisis reactions, details a four-phase crisis response. The first two phases form an acute response to sudden, unexpected violence: (1) immediate shock, disbelief and denial with concomitant paralysis of action and

denial of sensory impressions; and (2) frozen fright in which there is a pseudo-calm detached behavior pattern which is largely made up of automatic responses.

In the third phase there is traumatic depression with cyclical emotions of rage, apathy, resentment, resignation, anger. Exaggerated startle reactions are common as are insomnia, nightmares, fantasies.

Symonds believes that the third phase is critical for victims and the eventual outcome of their reactions to crisis. In this phase the individual reviews and replays the event sequences and her responses during and after them. Questions about causality and responsibility predominate. Self-recrimination is common:

Victims review their "wartime" behavior under peacetime conditions and won't accept that all individuals who experience a sudden and unexpected violent act, especially if it is accompanied by dramatic acts or threats to life, will be terrified-will freeze, submit, or run in panic and terror. (Symonds, 1980, p. 35)

The fourth phase is devoted to recovery. During this phase the survivor works at integrating the events of victimization into her ongoing lifestyle.

Symonds, in attempting to understand dysfunctional recoveries after criminal violence, reviewed psychological responses of 600 victims of violent crime. One of his findings was that of the second assault. In this second assault, the victim encounters

unsympathetic helpers: criminal justice system personnel, emergency room caregivers, unsympathetic or blaming family and friends, etc.

Acknowledging the inefficient, oftentimes burnt-out realities of caregivers and helpers, Symonds cautions the reader to recognize that it is the victim's sense of powerlessness vis-a-vis her assailant and the unpredictable nature of the first assault which makes the second assault so devastating. The victim's sense of betrayal during the crime is continued and exacerbated in her contacts with less than sympathetic helpers or caregivers. The second assault continues, and likely extends, her personal injuries.

Utilizing psychological knowledge gained in his work with holocaust survivors, Symonds believes that victims need to be counselled in a way that teaches them that "survival is getting even" (p. 38). He writes, "Every day they are alive, living without fear, survivors of the camps destroy the power of Hitler to have destroyed them. It is the only revenge that victims can employ with anonymous criminals" (p. 38).

#### Crisis Theory and Rape

S. Sutherland (nee Fox) and D. J. Scherl (1970, 1972) published victim sympathetic research which

assumed that women who reported rape during psychotherapy or crisis center encounters had actually been raped. In their brief descriptive study ( $N = 13$ ) of women who sought crisis intervention services from a community mental health center, the authors described the aftermath of rape from the victim's perspectives. Pre-rape these women were accomplished, independent, psychologically healthy women. Following the rape they were in crisis. Their recovery processes, according to these authors, followed a three-stage process: an initial phase of shock and disbelief in which fear and anxiety are evident; an interim phase in which the woman appears to have adjusted and to be back in control of her life; and a final phase which begins with re-opened memories of rape and in which resolution can then begin.

Within the first stage or phase the women were seen as emotionally volatile and agitated. Some women were highly verbal while others were scarcely able to talk at all. Sutherland and Scherl found women in this stage to be very open to assistance from others.

During the second phase, a phase called pseudo-coping by the authors, denial, suppression, and rationalization are used by the woman to cope.

Emotions are blunted. Any available psychic energy is placed into regaining emotional control. During this time, women often resist medical or psychological help.

The final phase likely begins with a specific re-opening of rape memories. However, it may demonstrate itself as the woman gradually experiences a deteriorated ability to cope with life. She may become severely depressed. During this phase the woman's tasks are to move towards resolution or integration. The authors report that she needs to complete a comprehensive review of the rape event and of her own responses within it and following it. She needs to review any perceived participation in the rape event and to deal with behavioral self-blaming. Finally, she needs to reach some resolution of her feelings toward the assailant. She needs to "detoxify" her rage. She needs to integrate the event into her life and move forward into the ongoing developmental agenda of her life, the agenda which rape interrupted (1970, pp. 503-511; 1972, pp. 37-42).

In their book, Medea and Thompson (1974) identified a multi-phase adjustment process after a sexual assault. In the initial reaction of women to rape, the authors reported that women may be in shock, experiencing anxiety and agitation. This may manifest itself as either overt hysteria, agitation, crying and



laughter, or as a stunned calm. Medea and Thompson urge the reader to understand that the woman in this phase is probably not yet thinking or acting under rational control. The woman attempts, in this phase, to get her life back by working to regain self-control.

Once the woman enters the second phase, she often appears to be coping well. Inwardly and outwardly she attempts to deny the strength of her emotional reaction to the rape event. She copes by directing her psychic energy in efforts to repress, suppress or deny the extent of her personal trauma. She refuses to allow memories or thoughts of the rape to surface. The authors advise their audience that this coping style may persist throughout the woman's remaining life.

However, some women enter a final stage which often begins with depression. Active reliving of the incident consumes their time and energy. Fear, rage and/or guilt may predominate their waking and sleeping realities as they experience nightmares, flashbacks, and intrusive cognitive memories. In this phase the woman has the opportunity to resolve her feelings about herself, her assailant, her world, and the actual rape event itself. Of this process, the authors write, "The woman has to re-establish her security. She must determine how this terrible thing came about, if it could happen again, and exactly how she can go on in a

world that is so threatening" (p. 104). The goal of this phase is resolution in which the woman establishes that she is a worthwhile human being who has been wronged and who will not accept such treatment as acceptable.

A. W. Burgess and L. L. Holmstrom (1974a, 1974b) saw more than one hundred adult and child victims of rape in a Boston emergency room. Their work is recognized as foundational to much current thinking about rape. While the complete corpus of their combined work (as well as their individual books and articles about rape) is extensive, all of it extends these earliest understandings of rape as a situational crisis which inevitably disrupts the victim's ongoing life.

In their description of victim's responses to rape, phase one is called the phase of disorganization. The victim is seen as being in acute crisis. Some women respond expressively to rape by pacing, crying, sobbing, and agitated conversation. Other women respond by self-containment in which they appear composed, calm, and self-controlled. These women appear to subdue or mask their thoughts and feelings. Within the immediate aftermath of rape, victims are likely to have some or all of the following physiological reactions: sleep pattern disturbances;

eating pattern disturbances; symptoms specifically related to the form of attack such as vaginal or rectal pain. Emotions include fear of physical injury, further mutilation by the rapist, death. Others include humiliation, degradation, guilt, shame, embarrassment, rage, anger, desire for revenge. Mood swings are common. Cognitive processes may include attempts to forget or to avoid thinking about the attack.

As the woman moves into a second phase, that of long-term resolution, she needs to cope with changes in four major areas of her life: physical lifestyle; psychological lifestyle; social lifestyle; and sexual lifestyle. It is likely that the woman will experience rape-induced changes and symptoms in each of these four vectors of her life. Suicidal impulses, nightmares, depression, sexual dysfunctions, phobias and other severe reactions must be faced and resolved (1974b, pp. 37-50; 1979b, pp. 35-48).

According to Holmstrom and Burgess (1975) three scenarios for rape affect the woman and her responses. Rape trauma is the most severe. Forced, violent penetration characterizes this form of rape. Accessory to sex trauma occurs when the victim is taken advantage of by the assailant in a situation of clear power differentials. For example, children are assumed

unable to give willful consent, as are persons with developmental retardation. Finally, sex stress situations are those where initial consent was given but was withdrawn (pp. 1288-91).

Burgess and Holmstrom (1979a, 1979b) asked women about factors in their recovery. From their research five factors emerged as involved significantly in women's self-report of recovery: prior life stress; a prior relationship with the assailant; the type of language used by the assailant; the amount of violence contained in the rape situation; and post-rape responses to the woman by helping people such as police or medical personnel.

E. Sales, M. Baum, and B. Shane (1984) identify the quantity of violence in the actual attack as a crucial factor for a woman's recovery process. Their particular understanding of recovery is that of coping with the demands and routines of daily life. They found that coping outcomes for women are influenced by the interaction of the attack's suddenness and non-predictability with the victim's prior resources for coping. From their study of rape victims ( $N = 127$ ), they describe a complex model of recovery.

They consider the first responses of the woman as she seeks to recover from rape to lie in the pre-assault phase of a woman's life. Pre-assault factors

(age, psycho-social problems such as alcoholism, economic stress, family life conflicts, etc.) will greatly affect the woman's post-rape recovery. Prior events of the woman's life (an earlier history of sexual abuse or assault) as well as the prior configuration of the woman's personality is important in estimating how she will recover after rape.

In addition, the event itself is a segment of concern for post-rape recovery. The degree of violence and brutality, the presence or absence of a weapon, the length of time involved, the implied verbal or nonverbal cues of a greater potential violence with non-compliance, and the presence or absence of actual penetration are all factors which contribute to a woman's responses to her violation.

As with other authors, Sales and associates recognize an immediate post-rape crisis period. From their three year follow-up contacts with victims, they also identify a time period (after the immediate crisis has passed) in which victims reach a plateau period. This occurs approximately six months after the victimization event. During the plateau period, the woman appears to have regained her composure, to be "normal". At this six-month period, the woman usually

has resumed her pre-rape levels of social activity. The plateau ends with a reactivation of the immediate post-rape symptoms.

During the duration of their research, women, after the plateau period ended, did not again return to a pre-rape level of functioning. The authors question the relationship of social activity to symptom reactivation. They speculate that behavior normalization may take place before the rape's emotional reverberations have been fully contained within the woman's personality structures.

From their work, Sales and associates believe that post-rape sequelae may last longer than a simple crisis model suggests. In addition to the time issues, they believe that the woman does not return to her pre-rape lifestyle and coping behaviors. Adjustment is seen to involve recurring issues inasmuch as there is a permanent scarring of the woman's personality after an episode of sexual violence.

### Stress Theory

H. Selye (1956, 1974) is generally credited with the first extended research into the relationship of stress to human wellness and wholeness. In his initial book he posited that the human stress response was made

in reaction to a variety of stressors. Stressors could be internal (physical illness) or external (robbery). Stress activates the body's adaptive processes. Selye described a physiological response which he named General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS). The GAS is activated when a stressor activates an alarm reaction. In turn, a stage of resistance is activated during which the person appears to return to normal. During this phase there is heightened resistance to the specific triggering stressor. However, there is lessened resistance to other intervening stressors. An example from the biological realm illustrates this. After major surgery, during the recovery period, an individual may respond with much more irritation than usual to small stressors. Finally, in any stress situation, the organism either resolves the crisis and returns to equilibrium or a stage of exhaustion is reached. When physiological exhaustion is not resolved, death can result (1950, pp. 97-104). A crisis cannot be indefinite; it is, by its nature, time-limited.

In R. S. Lazarus' (1966) research, cognitive appraisal is an important factor in the development of stress responses. The human organism must recognize, in some way, the presence of a stressor before a stress response begins. Lazarus calls this a process of

cognitive appraisal. As part of cognitive appraisal the individual weighs the demands of the stressor and the resources available to cope with these demands. By means of primary appraisal, the person assesses the seriousness of the demand being made upon her coping abilities. Once the person "decides" that the situation calls for a response of some kind, a process of secondary appraisal is activated in which the person evaluates her resources and their accessibility to her in this particular stress situation.

M. Horowitz (1976) proposed that the stress of victimization could be understood within the conceptual framework of a "stress response syndrome." A victim's stress responses can be expected to follow the following phases: initial outcry; denial; intrusive and disturbed ideation and cognitive processing; repetitive working the event through by conversations with supportive others; and completion.

Psychological, social and physical stressors all activate the body's physiological stress response system. The physiological responses are built into the human body and function automatically. However, psychological reactions to stress are believed to be learned, heavily dependent upon human perception and



interpretation processes (Zimbardo, 1985, p. 503-504). Psychological responses to a stressor include behavioral, emotional and cognitive patterns.

Mild stress often improves an individual's task performance. However, either intense, severe stress or long-lasting moderate to severe stress are highly disruptive. Severe stress may even immobilize the person completely. Emotionally, mild stress may create a sense of excitement, challenge, or even exhilaration. However, intense, severe stress is more likely to create negative consequences. Individuals may experience an acute episode of a post-traumatic stress disorder or a longer-acting residual stress pattern (Zimbardo, p. 503).

Zimbardo states that, in general, cognitive functioning is adversely affected by too much stress. He uses a formula, "The greater the stress, the greater the reduction in cognitive efficiency and the interference with flexible thinking" (p. 504).

Stress can be created in positive situations (such as marriage) as well as in negative ones (such as rape). Sudden changes are frequently more stressful than are planned changes. However, both are stressful. Zimbardo details a variety of situations in which stress is a significant factor in human life: the daily little hassles of life; catastrophic natural

events such as tornadoes; catastrophic human events such as warfare; chronic societal stress such as overcrowding (pp. 505-509).

### Stress Theory and Rape

The Queen's Bench Foundation (1976a; 1976b) study of rape's aftermath in the lives of fifty five San Francisco victims supports a stress model for understanding women's long-term responses to rape. Of the women in the Queen's Bench study, 77% reported long-term after effects in their lives. A concept of personal safety had changed for 89% of the women while 14% reported sexual disturbances which disrupted relationships with lovers or spouses. In addition, many expressed feelings of worthlessness, shame, guilt, and helplessness as well as a perceived inability to protect themselves.

Building upon life change units stress theories (Holmes & Rahe, 1967), L. O. Ruch, S. M. Chandler and R. A. Herter (1980) defined life stressors as events which upset an ongoing homeostasis present within an individual's usual patterns of living. During life change events such as marriage, severe debt, illness, or deaths of family members, the person's adaptive structures are stressed. From their interview survey

of women with adult sexual abuse and assault histories ( $N = 138$ ), they assessed rape's impact in three vectors: behavior, emotion and cognition. In another study ( $N = 166$ ) Ruch and Chandler (1983) found that a previous rape was the most significant explanation for women's delayed recovery after rape. Other variables from the woman's pre-rape life included low self-esteem, economic stress, lack of consistent and predictable social support, and earlier mental health problems.

The level of rape impact immediately after rape was influenced by the degree of life changes pre-rape. A curvilinear relationship was noted. Women with no pre-rape life changes experienced moderate to severe stress; women with major pre-rape life changes experienced severe stress; women with minor life changes pre-rape scored moderate stress, less than any other group of women. This curvilinear relationship was maintained during follow-up contacts. Women with major life changes were traumatized the most; women with no changes were traumatized moderately; women with minor prior life changes manifested the least trauma.

In addition to life change units, three other variables contributed to major rape impact: a victim's

prior mental health or substance abuse problems, extensive use of coercive, physical force by the rapist; and age levels above twenty-five.

Apparently the stress associated with major life changes aggravates the emotional trauma of rape's aftermath. Two explanations are proposed to explain the risk of a woman with no pre-rape life changes. Perhaps the woman with minor life change units has learned to cope with stressful situations and therefore has a higher self-esteem. The alternative explanation is that perhaps women who are afraid of life changes, and who have not made significant changes anywhere in their lifestyles, are more at risk with rape.

In the second study a two-year follow-up of 166 rape victims was carried out. Using the terminology "sexual assault trauma", they identified three distinct patterns of victim response. Some women fit a crisis pattern in which the most intense response occurs immediately after rape and gradually decreases in its intensity over time. Secondly, some women demonstrated a steady-state response in which a relatively even level of trauma is experienced over an extended length of time. Finally, there was a delayed pattern in which the level of trauma tends to increase over an extended length of time (Ruch & Leon, 1983).

One significant variable in this study was that of prior sexual abuse or assault in the woman's life history. Women with such a history initially showed less trauma. However, over time more traumatic effects were displayed. "Previously raped women are especially at risk for a delayed response" (p. 19).

An article by S. D. Suarez and G. G. Gallup (1979) considers rape within the context of laboratory animal research. They discuss rape within a paradigm of animal stress responses within the predator-prey relationship. Spontaneous animal hypnosis has long been recognized in animal labs. The evolutionary significance of this reaction, according to the authors, is that it provides the animal with one last effort at survival. Within the laboratory setting, researchers elicit tonic immobility by placing the animal within restraints on a flat surface or in a trough. Initially, the animal struggles. When its struggle is not successful in gaining its freedom, the animal enters a catatonic like state in which the restraint can be removed and the animal is unable to resume voluntary movement. Muscle activity and vocal activity are suppressed. Eye closures become intermittent. The animal has Parkinson-like tremors. The heart rate decreases; the body temperature lowers; respiration rates increase. Electroencephalograms

demonstrate changes of brain wave activity. The period of immobility after restraints have been removed lasts from seconds to minutes. The animal leaves its immobile status abruptly. It usually demonstrates a period of unusual and aggressive behavior. Tonic immobility has been observed in insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals and primates.

In the wild, in a predatory situation, the vulnerable animal attempts to flee. If that is not possible, it often freezes to avoid detection. It is as if the animal being preyed upon "knows" that movement is often a trigger for predatory attacks. At other times if the animal senses it is cornered, there may be a vigorous fight. Finally, an automatic neurological response of tonic immobility occurs; the animal is unable to move.

An episode of tonic immobility is viewed by animal researchers as a terminal defense of the animal against death. The duration of tonic immobility appears inversely proportional to the animal's opportunity to escape. During this phase of animal behavior in a predation relationship, the preyed-upon animal is conscious, alert, and watchful. It is, however, unable to move. To animal researchers, fear appears to be the animal's major response to imminent death.

Suarez and Gallop consider that tonic immobility in animals and rape induced paralysis among women are similar phenomena. They believe women's comments after rape provide clues that this is the case. Phrases such as, "scared stiff" or "frozen with fear" are similar to fuller sentences. Women often say, "My body felt paralyzed. I went limp. I couldn't move." Women additionally describe their inability to vocalize, non-voluntary and intermittent eye-closures, tremors or involuntary shaking, numbness, insensitivity to pain, a sensation of being ice-cold, a rapid onset and an equally abrupt inability to move. In addition, they report full consciousness, watchfulness, and complete awareness of the environment. Women who report such a response to rape are frequently able to recall the rape's exact sequencing of events. In addition, when they leave their immobile state, they report a great desire to aggressively harm the rapist in some way.

Seeing rape as an act of predation and victim behavior as prey-like response behavior to the stress of sexual assault can possibly change the conceptual worldview regarding non-resistance and compliance of women during rape events. If immobility is not conscious or unconscious consent but rather is a profound survival instinct, a remnant of the woman's shared animal nature with other animals who are also

preyed upon, profound questions can be asked of women who blame themselves for this immobility. Perhaps the immobility symptoms of women in a rape situation reflect her body's automatic assessment of the situation as one in which her life is in danger. If, for example, the rapist is a person for whom female struggle and suffering is essential for arousal, the immobility pattern could potentially yield minimal struggle and harm.

Suarez and Gallop claim that the experience of fear in a stressful, life-threatening situation is a shared experience among all animals. Tonic immobility is a last-ditch attempt of the animal to cope and to survive. They wonder whether humans also share an automatic terminal immobility pattern with other animals. Since it is likely that evolutionary processes have not eliminated automatic, instinctive responses to fear in a life-threatening situation, it is very possible that Suarez and Gallup have identified a pattern of response experienced by some women in a rape situation.

#### Loss and Grief Models

Another model which has been proposed for understanding victimization is that of loss and grief.



In 1944, E. Lindemann described grief work as a psychological reaction to the loss of a loved one, a personal goal, or some other material loss. While the grieving persons appears sad and depressed, "normal" grief work, according to Lindemann is time-limited. Its acute period lasts four to six weeks. During this time psychic realities include preoccupation with the loss or death, bodily symptoms, self-blaming, feelings of sadness and guilt, as well as restlessness and a decreased ability to concentrate.

In 1969, E. Kubler-Ross published the influential book, On Death and Dying, in which she reported that grief work was a predictable phenomenon among those who were dying. Grief work was seen as progressing through five stages. In the first stage, denial and isolation, dying persons respond with the "No, not me." response. Others around the dying person respond with isolation and avoidance behaviors (pp. 38-49).

In the second stage there is anger, rage, resentment, and envy of others who are more healthy. The "Why me?" question is asked implicitly or explicitly. In their fury in this stage, they provoke reciprocal anger from those who love them and those who provide care to them. Anger during this period may be directed also at God (pp. 50-81).

By the third stage, the person is bargaining for more life. She promises future good behavior for the return of more days of life. What is sought is the postponement of death or the lessening of suffering. Most of these bargaining negotiations are private ones between the person and God (pp. 82-84).

Following bargaining, the individual begins to recognize that her death is imminent and inevitable. Depression results as if she is grieving her loss of all that is important to her. In addition to the anticipated death, the individual comprehends the totality of her losses. Kubler-Ross sees this depression and grief work as necessary preparation for the separation which is final. In addition to dealing with the current, impending loss, many individuals also re-work previous losses and separations. It is as if the person is engaged in a life review, seeking to establish its meaning, just as it is slipping away (pp. 85-111).

Finally, the individual enters a more peaceful time in which she reaches acceptance of her death and her losses. Kubler-Ross represents this time as a void of feelings, a time in which the personality prepares to detach itself from the world.

Family and friends make a similar journey, albeit not the same journey, as does the dying one. They too

move through the stages of grief work. Often the patient will not die until she knows or believes that her most significant others have come to accept her own dying. When they no longer hold her to life, she is free to choose her dying time.

Studies of depression among victims of rape imply an underlying loss model even when this is not explicitly stated in research protocols. The "garden variety" of depression (Zimbardo, 1985, p. 537) is seen with loss, separations, failure, chronic frustration and stress. Depression is evidenced in one or more vectors: mood, thought, motivation or physical symptoms. While there has been a renewed interest in organic causes of depression (genetic or biochemical factors), a strong interest in psychogenic factors remains.

A. Beck (1976) has argued that depressed individuals demonstrate three specific thinking or cognitive distortions: a negative self-view, a negative worldview and a negative view of the future. G. Bach and H. Goldberg (1974) consider repressed, denied and mismanaged anger as a causal factor in the development of depression. M. Maultsby (1984) considers faulty cognitive beliefs as an important factor. H. Gleitman (1986) briefly discusses a diathesis-stress model in

which a predisposition towards depression is activated by stress. In addition, death and dying literature has demonstrated a connection of depression to the loss associated with dying for both the person who is dying and for the survivors of another's death (Kubler-Ross, 1969, Schneidman, 1973).

#### Loss, Grief Work, Depression and Rape Research

In two separate studies Ellen Frank and her associates (1979, 1984) studied depression in women after a rape event. In the 1979 study ( $N = 34$ ) victims were studied; 44% were moderately or severely depressed. Commonly reported symptoms included depressed mood (86%), guilt (86%), decreased concentration (66%), loss of interest (60%), appetite disturbances or weight loss (40%), loss of energy (26%) and suicidal ideation (6%). The authors conclude that depressive symptoms are clinically important among recent sexual assault victims.

In their 1984 study ( $N = 90$ ), assessments were done at specific time intervals (four weeks, three, six, and 12 months). At the four-week mark, 56% of the women were moderately or severely depressed. Symptoms were sleep disturbances (70%), depressed mood (67%), appetite disturbances (53%), feelings of guilt focused

on the woman's inability to protect herself (53%), decreased concentration (53%), loss of interest in normal activities of daily living (51%), loss of energy (47%), psychomotor disturbances (45%), and suicidal ideation (27%). At three, six, and nine months there was diminution of these symptoms.

In a series of studies Becker and associates (1979a, 1982, 1984a, 1984b, 1986) examined two post-rape phenomena: depression and sexual dysfunctions. Depression caused by sexual assault was prevalent in these studies. Assailant use of a weapon was most highly correlated with development of depression. Becker, et al., (1984a) speculate that the weapon signifies death possibilities to the woman and demonstrates the greatest possible loss of control to the woman during victimization. Depression continued for long periods after assault. It is not, therefore, simply a transient reaction to victimization.

Sexual dysfunctions which follow rape and which were precipitated by the rape include fear of sex, desire dysfunctions, arousal dysfunctions, and pain with coitus (Becker, et al., 1982). The chronic nature of sexual dysfunctions was researched in a second study (1984b). Of 371 survivors, 59% reported at least one sexual dysfunction. Of this subgroup 60% had been assaulted three or more years prior to the research.

Ipema (1979) in a cross-racial study (black women,  $n = 5$ ; white women,  $n = 6$ ) included women whose captivity ranged from five minutes to twenty-four hours. They found that in rape, the women lost the ability to give consent to sexual contact. Rape destroyed women's ability to trust. In addition, women reported an acute awareness of the possibility that they would die if the rapist chose to kill them. Ipema uses the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief model to explain women's reactions after rape. Following victimization, the woman must integrate and assimilate this disruptive event and create a new way of life. Many of the women reported struggling to recover meaningful interactions and relationships with others.

J. M. Santiago, F. McCall-Perez, M. Gorcey and A. Beigel (1985) interviewed 35 post-rape victims after a post-rape interval ranging between 2 and 46 years. Women who had experienced prior sexual abuse reported more anxiety and depression after rape. Women with no prior history of sexual abuse reported higher anxiety and fear but did not demonstrate significant levels of depression.

In 1983, K. L. Scheppele and P. B. Bart published findings from a descriptive study with women who had avoided rape ( $n = 51$ ) and women who had been raped

( $n = 43$ ). Each woman included in the study defined herself vis a vis the two categories. Post-assault, each woman was asked to describe the assault and its consequences. While each of the 94 women saw the world as a more dangerous place, women who had been raped saw the world in more dangerous contours than did rape-avoiding women. If the assault took place in a geographical area defined pre-rape as dangerous, there was a less intense perceptual change than if the geographical area was defined pre-rape as safe.

The psychological "geography of fear" has markings for the women in this study. Not all situations in a woman's life are identified as equally dangerous. Daytime is seen as safer than nighttime; home as safer than the street; women in a man's custody as safer than women alone. Women see some aspects of the geography of rape as in their control. To cope with the threat of rape and the geography of fear, women develop their own particularized rules of rape avoidance.

Yet, according to this study, the psychological geography of fear does not match the geography of rape. According to these authors, 40% of all rapes occur in the daytime; 18%-56% of all rapes occur in a woman's home; 18%-50% of the women are apt to be raped by an acquaintance.

Post-rape some of these women demonstrated a variety of acceptance or growth reactions: 12% reported minimal reactions with few or no consequent behavioral changes in their lives; 14% reported some positive changes in self-perception, a factor they related to the discovery that they could handle themselves in such a situation.

However, 37% of women identified more danger in the world and more fear in themselves while 32% reported a diffuse reaction in which many life situations were seen as dangerous. In this group some intellectual beliefs were evident: (1) men as a total group are dangerous; (2) rape is pervasive; and (3) all women are vulnerable. These women had, according to Scheppele and Bart, created a theory about rape to make sense out of their own assault. The final group of women (23%) in this study are characterized as a total fear group because of their post-rape perception that the world itself is a very dangerous place. These women tended to withdraw from life and its relationships with others into a reclusive lifestyle. Two women changed their pre-rape lifestyle into a more dangerous post-rape one: one became a prostitute and one practiced multiple sexual relationships.

The extent to which a woman's perceptions of the world change appears to be dependent upon two factors:



completed rape and genital penetration by the penis. Of the completed rape victims, 37% reported a total fear reaction, and 50% reported a diffuse fear reaction. For rape avoiders, 12% experienced total fear and 22% experienced a diffuse reaction. Forced cunnilingus or digital penetration was less often defined as rape than any form of penile penetration.

The researchers asked an additional set of questions. The first was, "When does an interaction become defined as an attack?" The second was, "When does a woman define a sexual attack as rape?" Many of the women identified something as wrong before the actual attack began. Women who reported avoiding rape reported that they acted immediately on this perception while women who were raped delayed action by dismissing the intuition. Women who avoided rape reported earlier perceptions of danger than did women who were raped.

Three categories of male sexual behavior emerged in women's descriptions of rape: phallic acts which involved the attacker's penis; non-phallic acts which did not involve the penis, e.g. cunnilingus; and other actions such as tearing off the woman's clothing. Women who self-defined themselves as raped were those who experienced phallic sex ( $n = 42$ ). Only one woman out of the group who experienced non-phallic sex

defined this act as rape ( $n = 24$ ). For this woman the act was the placement of a knife in her vagina as a substitute penis.

In the group of women who experienced penetration, three out of 51 women defined themselves as having avoided rape. However, each of these believed they prevented their attacker from reaching his goals: two prevented intravaginal orgasm and one chased her attacker until the police caught him.

In their summary the authors conclude that women's self-labeling of themselves as a victim or as an avoider depends more upon what is done with a penis than what is done to a vagina. The women's definitions were dependent upon what men had done to them or forced them to do to him.

A provocative question is raised by this study. If women's recovery from sexual assault is partially determined by their self-definitions of themselves as victims or rape avoiders, what is the effect of the contemporary mood in which all forced sexual encounters are defined as rape? What is the impact when counselors or other helping people attempt to "prove" to a woman that she has been raped when she does not so define her life situation in this manner?

S. E. Taylor, J. V. Wood, and R. Lichtman (1983) analyzed coping mechanisms of women after

victimization. Some women cope by making social comparisons with others who are perceived as even less fortunate than they, those whom they see as having been more severely victimized, e.g., an older woman says, "At least I wasn't a virgin; I knew about sex." A second response is to focus upon the positive attributes of the situation, e.g., a woman says, "I am so glad he didn't have a weapon with him." A third response is to focus on making a hypothesis of a worse world, e.g., a woman says, "It could have been worse. He could have beaten me or killed me."

Some women focus on post-rape benefits, construing good results from a bad event, e.g., "I have learned so much about myself and am a much stronger person now than I was before." Finally some women compare themselves with a model of normative adjustment, e.g., "I think I am coping with this so much more effectively than many women do."

The authors conclude, "Victims typically heal their wounds in private" (pp. 39-40). Each of these forms of coping behavior is adaptive and demonstrates an effort to place the woman's own experience in a greater context, a more inclusive perspective than her own privatized post-rape reality.

R. Janoff-Bulmann and I. H. Frieze (1983) studied women's reactions to victimization. The event of

victimization causes shock, helplessness, terror, confusion, anxiety and fear. After the event is over the woman evaluates what happened to her and what it now means to her life. In retrospect, she reviews her pre-rape world and finds her pre-rape expectations and assumptions to be shattered or severely challenged. Pre-rape, much of her world-view was likely to be intuitive and unconscious. After rape, she creates a new, hopefully viable set of expectations about life. These will be conscious. Post-rape the woman reviews her values and makes some decisions about her core values.

For example pre-rape many women have specific, implicit expectations and values about the world: (1) the world is meaningful and comprehensible; and (2) a woman is invulnerable to rape if she is careful about what she does, where she goes, and whom she is with. When rape occurs, both are altered or shattered. The woman eventually must attempt to make sense out of this intrusive event in her life. Continuity and discontinuity must both be dealt with.

The authors note in a perceptive and helpful comment that the helplessness women experience in the event of victimization is different from the helplessness women may experience in the post-rape recovery period. People powerless during victimization

may become quite empowered during the post-rape recovery period as they reclaim their personal power (p. 13).

### Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

The American Psychiatric Association (1980) in its efforts to create a diagnostic manual for clinical diagnosis has summarized its own understandings of women's post-rape recovery and pathology. An essential feature of their diagnostic category, post-traumatic stress disorder is that it attempts to describe a human response to traumatizing events in the external world. Characteristic symptoms include repeated re-experiences of the traumatizing event, numbing of responsiveness to or reduced involvement with the external world, and a variety of psychosocial and biological dysfunction.

Three types of PTSD are documented: acute, chronic, and delayed response. In addition, Burgess and Holmstrom (1985) suggest two more subtypes: compounded reaction to rape trauma in which rape complicates pre-existing pathology, and unresolved sexual trauma in which a sexual trauma triggers memories and awareness of an earlier unresolved sexual assault.

Four major criteria exist to assist clinicians in making a diagnosis of PTSD. The first is that the stressor have significant magnitude. Significant magnitude is described as that magnitude which would precipitate symptoms in almost everyone who experiences this stressor. Secondly, the client's symptoms include intrusive thoughts and imagery. Flashbacks, day images, dreams and nightmares are commonly included in this criteria. The third criterion is the internal experience of psychic numbing. Finally, there is a list of symptoms from which two or more are present.

Stressors which commonly create this "pathological response" include military combat, torture, hostage experiences, major natural disasters such as massive tornadoes, and rape. There can be an acute reaction which immediately follows the stress event or there can be a delayed reaction which takes place weeks, months, or years later.

### Conclusions

In summary, the clinical sciences tend to see women's responses after rape in three somewhat overlapping models: crisis, stress, grief and loss. Nearly fifteen years after feminist women began to discuss women's own perspectives in rape, the

therapeutic community has responded to women's post-rape reactions by accepting rape as an event which is similar to combat, severe natural disasters, or torture. Each of these models accepts the limitations of stage theory models in which recovery is seen as historical, linear, and sequential in a progressive manner. Therapeutic interventions, therefore, are directed towards assisting women to move forward from the event towards an ability to cope. Coping is sometimes defined as returning to pre-rape functioning and sometimes as moving forward to a new integration in which she is stronger than she was pre-rape.

Burgess and Holmstrom (1985) identify treatment issues for rape victims. Rape is a crisis, the victim is normal, and treatment needs to be designed to assist the victim regain her previous levels of functioning. During the acute phase of the woman's response to rape, "issues unique to the crisis need to be resolved and integrated or the victim will fail to return to a pre-crisis level of functioning" (p. 54). Utilizing Bassuk's phrase, rape work (1980), Burgess and Holmstrom state that rape work includes the return to a sense of safety, return to self-valuing, as well as the reestablishment of mutually satisfying relationships with others.

Each of these theories assumes that the woman who is raped experiences a strong reaction to her victimization. Each also contains an implicit belief that the woman's experience of rape can create severe dysfunctions in living. Each specific woman, of course, has a unique pattern of responding to a rape event. Therefore, stress theory, crisis theory and loss theory are all useful models for understanding a woman's life response after rape.

However, the weaknesses of stage models for describing victim recovery after rape are becoming evident. Some women do not move through predictable stages to a predictable outcome. In addition, awareness grows that recovery often takes more time than six to eight weeks. This awareness has caused a reassessment of the appropriateness of short term therapy for women after an event of rape. The nature of recovery is now seen differently than it was early in the rape crisis movement. Few clinicians believe it is possible to assume the woman will return to her pre-rape life unchanged by her experience with sexual violence. Therapists, concerned with the woman's therapeutic resolution of rape's trauma, increasingly recognize that the woman's personality structure has ~~probably~~ <sup>probably</sup> undergone major changes, and that she will need time and assistance from others to heal the wounds



of sexual violence. The variability of responses among women has led researchers and clinicians to seek additional models for understanding women's responses to rape. No one model is sufficient for use by clinicians in understanding every woman's recovery process. Most clinicians recognize that individual women will have unique responses in some areas of their recovery process. Clinicians do not see themselves as facing an either/or situation. Rather, they recognize that a variety of models is essential for understanding the trauma of rape and the recovery potentials present within each woman.

## Section Two

### Contemporary Myths and the Rape of Women

We live in a web of ideas,  
a fabric of our own making.

Suzanne K. Langer  
The Growing Center of Knowledge

#### Introduction

Section Two of this dissertation focuses on three contemporary mythic systems: they are patriarchal Christianity, pornography, and psychoanalysis. Each of these systems has informed today's social opinion about rape. Each contains assumptions about women and their true nature. Each has informed today's social opinion about rape.

The word myth, as it is used in this section, is most appropriately understood as "a popular belief or tradition that has grown up around something or someone; especially one that embodies ideals and institutions of a society or segment of society" (Webster's, 1988, p. 785). In other words, this section conceives of myth in social terms. Social myths both create and reveal a society's worldview. As we have seen in Section One, stories or myths can

have multiple functions. They can function as descriptive accounts of what is or as prescriptive norms for what should be.

Social mythology, according to E. Janeway (1971), shapes the world in which humans live. Myths "remain attached to the emotions of those who uphold them and take them as guides to behavior" (p. 34). They reflect what humans fear as well as what they desire. Part of mythic complexity in human life is related to the fact that myth contains psychic truth "expressed symbolically" (p. 36). Myth cannot be argued down with facts. Myth does not "merely wish, it wills; and when it speaks it commands attention" (p. 37). Thus, the imperative mood is central to mythic thinking. Believers in any given myth insist upon its binding nature. Inasmuch as myth's social function is to order, to control, and to prevent the return of primordial chaos, the myth's universal nature is essential. To disobey the myth's imperative is to disrupt the universe (p. 295). When a social myth is seriously challenged and apparently in danger of being discredited, the social threat of its loss is perceived as menacing. Those who continue to insist upon its imperative nature are threatened by the prospective loss. Janeway speculates that this is so because the myth, once discredited, can no longer be accepted in

its authoritative binding nature. The remembered order of the past is lost and the feared chaos of the future appears imminent.

Social myth, therefore, has a conserving function. It continues the social world unchanged by explaining, interpreting, and justifying it. In its enunciation of commonly held beliefs and assumptions, myth calls upon sacred texts, ancient wisdom, common sense or intuitive, instinctive, natural knowing (p. 296).

Janeway says that "Change shivers the world" (p. 296). Social change demands psychological changes and creates additional changes in the structural relationships among people. In addition, it threatens deeply held belief systems. Change creates loneliness within those who count upon an unchanging, orderly, manageable world. Yet, according to Janeway, continuing to cling to old, outworn myths in a time of social change is dysfunctional because such clinging prevents creative thinking about positive social changes (pp. 297-298).

Of violence and sexual rage in male-authored fiction, Janeway comments that its foundation lies in the threats to men's gender as women change gender behavior. Changes in women's behavior and attitudes are thereby shaking long-held myths about relatedness between men and women. In addition, the concomitant

"natural" arrangements of power that have characterized gender relationships appear to be dissolving.

One might describe these changes [gender roles] as the tendency for woman's place and role to expand and take over man's world: to feminize it, as the first women's movement aimed to do. When we look at the situation this way, we see that men are being pressured from within by woman's increased freedom in personal relations and particularly by the control over their lives which the Pill has given them. . . . The more they prize their maleness (and if that is all they have to cling to, they will prize it highly) . . . the more such changes appear to threaten degradation and humiliation, the more they are seen as destructive. (p. 305)

In the midst of this internal malaise, men develop angry reactions toward women, angry reactions which are rooted in men's fear of the growing strength of women unchecked by traditional limits placed upon them. Janeway further comments that "the emotions which power these fantasies of male attacks on women, of sexual rage and sexual submission, should not be dismissed as nonsensical logic" (p. 305).

In Janeway's discussion of Norman Mailer's literary criticism of the works of Henry Miller she illustrates her more theoretical comments above. Mailer's understanding of Miller's works is that Miller's writings reveal a world in which men

detest women, revile them, humiliate them, defecate symbolically upon them, do everything to reduce them so one might dare to enter them and take pleasure of them . . . . So do men look to

destroy every quality in a woman which will give her the powers of a male, for she is in their eyes already armed with the power that she brought them forth. (p. 306)

For Mailer, the woman's natural reproductive action of birth-giving provides her with unmeasurable power. Janeway adds that it is the mythic quality of such male thinking about female sexuality which elicits male fantasies of violence against women.

Mythic systems which intersect with women's experiences of sexual violence within North America are numerous. Empirical theory and studies provide one methodological window for identifying and examining some of these systems. For example, in chapter 4, just world thinking was identified as a component of post-rape relationships for the woman. By means of just world thinking people judge the woman caught in an event of sexual violence. They do this by applying their worldview about rape to her particular situation. Since just world thinking includes the belief that people deserve what they get and get what they deserve, the woman is seen as responsible, in some way or other, for her own victimization by the rapist.

In addition, other methods of social analysis can be used to identify and examine foundational social myths. A. Davis (1983, 1985), for example, identifies

the North America's system of capitalist economics as one foundation for rape's existence in social behavior.

I want to suggest to you that rape bears a direct relationship to all of the existing power structures in a given society. This relationship is not a simple mechanical one, but rather involves complex structures reflecting the complex interconnectedness of race, gender, and class oppression which characterize that society. If we do not attempt to understand the nature of sexual violence as it relates to racial, class, and governmental violence and power, we can not even begin to develop strategies which will allow us to eventually purge our society of the oppressiveness of rape. (1985, p. 10)

Finally, information about a culture can be obtained by looking at its stories and theories as texts to be studied. Stories about women and their sexuality can provide another vantage point for examining women's encounters with rape and their subsequent reactions to its presence in their lives.

Each of these three myths reveals cultural beliefs about women, sexuality, and power. Each deals, in some way, with expected female behaviors. Each deals with the question of woman's nature in her shared humanity with man.

Patriarchal Christianity emerged from the early Christian era into its role as the dominant structural underpinning of Western religio-political systems for more than 1500 years. In this emergence, Christian values, teachings, and doctrines were incorporated into the structures of Western culture.

Sexually explicit art has existed in other than Christian societies as well as within Christian ones. However, W. Kendrick (1987) argues that pornography per se is a concept which emerged in the West during the eighteenth-century after the discovery of Pompeii's "obscene historical artifacts". Once the decision was made not to destroy this art of antiquity but to restrict its access to men of power and influence, the modern pornographic mind could be born. G. Rubin (1975) comments, "If it is women who are being transacted, then it is the men who give and take them who are linked, the woman being a conduit of a relationship rather than a partner to it" (p. 74). Men, in her view, learn to dominate their passion for women by dominating women. Within patriarchal reality men displace their passion for women in the direction of power. By dominating women, men become able to enter the privileged discourses of patriarchy and power (pp. 64-65).

Finally, psychoanalysis has its roots in nineteenth-century Europe. However, in the United States its influence is lodged decidedly within the post-Victorian twentieth-century. Its impact is felt within the arts, within historical analysis of events, within criminal justice systems, and within the healing disciplines.



Each of these three worldviews has a preferred metaphor system: Christianity describes salvation; pornography claims liberation; and psychoanalysis invokes healing. Each also has a preferred epistemology: Christianity claims revelation by means of the sacred text; pornography enacts the kinesthetic, imagistic, and experiential; and psychoanalysis evokes a variety of mental mechanisms as it explores the nature of human consciousness itself. All, however, participate in elaborate symbol systems which sustain inner mythic processes. While each of these three systems is visible in socio-political reality, often their function and power as social mythology is overlooked. According to Janeway (1971, 1981) and feminist philosopher M. Daly (1973a, 1978, 1984, 1987) they need re-naming in women's awareness so that their power and function are unveiled.

Daly considers sexual violence to be a form of female dismemberment within patriarchal "sadosadistic" societies. Women, who live in a society which encourages sexual violence against them, experience the rape event as a form of physical or psychic dismemberment. Actual rape of women exists within the encompassing cultural story of rape. Mythic stories which glorify women's dismemberment contribute to the actual rape of real women by creating a worldview

which sanctions violence against women. Thus the cycle of violence which is rooted in myth about the woman entraps the living woman. Story and actuality exist in a tensive relationship wherein each reinforces the other (Daly, 1973a, 13-67; Daly, 1978, pp. 33-105).

Because women, in times of mythic stories of dismemberment, are captured in "demonic power relationships," (Daly, 1973a, p. 43) they need to break through the unauthentic structures and stories which dismember them, thereby blocking them from recognizing and re-membering their authentic female identity. Breaking away from obsessive "phallic lust" which enslaves them, women free themselves to recognize that it is a fusion of obsessive lust and aggression that results in dismembering and killing rape (Daly, 1984, p. 1). For Daly, contemporary images of women are one such reality. She expresses her contempt for sadosocieties legitimized by sadospirituality and sadomasochistic obsessions. "This [sadospirituality] is characterized by obsessive asceticism imposed upon others as well as themselves by the fabricators of ascetic fixations, who become models and ideologists for those within their sphere of influence" (1984, pp. 35-36). Of the link to pornography, she is explicit. Both deal with the violation of female will and with her defilement (p. 36). The "Big Lie" is that

every woman wants it. She dismisses much psychological discussion with the word "psychobabble" which she includes in the "babblespheres." She calls women to Silence-breaking and Taboo-breaking as women name the hatred of the female present in men's "ologies" (1987, pp. 18-20; 86; 214).

Yet Daly is not unaware of women's participation in current cultural processes. She describes women's disorder as masosadism. Masosadism is injected into women by means of literature, fashion, theology, psychology, romance, and fairy tales (1984, pp. 59-60). Once injected, the woman doubts her own self and experiences this doubt as self-hatred. The manifestation of masosadism is radical passivity in which the woman becomes unwilling or unable to resist oppressiveness directed at herself or at other women. She becomes incapable of moral outrage on behalf of herself or others. She is incapacitated in action, "incapable of acting against those who are the originators, rulers and controlling legitimators of the sadostate" (pp. 59-60).

As Daly's work continuously shuttles between women's actual experiences within patriarchal culture and that culture's myths about women's presence in the world, her work as a philosopher is reminiscent of the anthropology of C. Geertz. In his writings he also

shuttles between the particular event and the cultural matrix within which that event takes place. He "privileges" a complex part of a culture, a ritual or gesture, for example, and reveals it as a paradigmatic microcosm (Shore, 1988, pp. 21-22).

Geertz, himself, writes that two types of understanding must converge if one is adequately to interpret a culture. There must be a description of particular symbolic forms and there must be contextualization. Within the contextualization of rituals or gestures, for example, the structure of meaning is present. Geertz comments:

This is, of course, nothing but the by-now-familiar trajectory of the hermeneutical circle: a dialectical tracking between the parts which comprise the whole and the whole which motivates the parts, in such a way as to bring parts and whole simultaneously into view. (1980, pp. 103-140)

Examining rape as a symbolic form or text that exists along side of other cultural forms of violence against women, questions of contextualization must be asked. Assuming, with Geertz, that structures of meaning become accessible to readers of cultural forms only within an understanding of their contexts, we begin to examine these three separate, yet related, systems. Each of these systems provides an inter-

pretation of woman's nature and comments upon her sexual roles within culture. Each is party to the dialogue of part and whole.

In the following chapters, these three stories (patriarchal Christianity, pornography, and psychoanalysis) are briefly described and discussed. Each of these stories is part of the context of life for Western women. The sociocultural history of European-American societies includes each of them. North American culture historically has been deeply affected by Christianity and psychoanalysis. In the decades following the second world war pornographic and/or sexually explicit representations have become routinely visible throughout North America. Because of the explosion of electronic technology, visually explicit pornography is as readily available in rural Midwest towns as well as in its coastal cities. The story of woman within each of the larger stories is examined. Interpretation of the larger story proceeds by asking how it relates to the rape of women.

## Chapter 5

### Patriarchal Christianity and Woman's Nature

When a system of power is thoroughly  
in command it has scarcely need to  
speak itself aloud.

Kate Millett  
Sexual Politics

#### Introduction

The presence of any feminist theology in Christianity implies, by its very presence, a critique; specifically that critique is directed towards masculinist or patriarchal understandings of Christian theology. While a plethora of books and articles have been dedicated to a critical analysis of patriarchal theology and its impact upon Western consciousness, such a complex and exhaustive analysis is not needed in a consideration of patriarchal Christianity and its relationship to the rape of women. Feminist theology has well documented its assumption that Western theology has been based upon the teachings and rulings of the fathers. Those teachings grounded in a patriarchal view of God and humanity have created misogynist images of women (Bird, 1974, 1988; Daly, 1973a, 1978; Morton, 1985; O'Faolin, 1973; Tribble,

1982, 1984). It is, in turn, those images which have led to oppressive actions toward women (Bullough & Bullough, 1974; Daly, 1978). In consideration of rape as a form of gender based oppression, the theology of Creation and its subsequent doctrines regarding woman's nature are the critical issues.

### Biblical Anthropology and Women

P. Bird (1988), in an article about the issue of sexist language and sacred text translations, asserts that the biblical text is thoroughly androcentric. The text, grounded in an androcentric, patriarchal world, conveys a limited anthropology and theology. She asserts that the text's sexist language alerts the reader "to a deep and persistent underlying cultural bias" (p. 90).

B. Throckmorton's brief essay (1988) about the impact of feminism upon New Testament studies comments in a similar vein. He believes a perceptual shift is going on because of the presence of women's voices and perceptions in biblical studies. Throckmorton claims that the world of the Bible was a male-oriented, androcentric world. Its androcentrism was in itself the prevailing world construct. Patriarchal understandings pervaded the languages spoken by the

people, their perceptions of themselves, and their beliefs about God. "Both their language and their orientation-the way in which they perceived everything-grew out of and legitimized patriarchy" (p. 87). In addition, partially as a consequence of the patriarchal nature of the text's world, patriarchalism has pervaded subsequent Western cultures. Included in that subsequent reality is the reality that biblical interpretation, just like the earlier authorship, occurs within patriarchal worldviews and logic. Feminist women scholars, therefore, are in the process of discovering "the heretofore largely hidden fact that there has been in the church since its earliest days a systematic silencing of women's voices, and a pervasive erasure of women's names-of their very persons" (p. 87).

P. Tribble, whose textual scholarship has re-examined classical and forgotten biblical texts about women, comments:

Born and Bred [sic] in a land of patriarchy, the Bible abounds in male imagery and language. For centuries, interpreters have explored and exploited this male language to articulate theology; to shape the contours and context of the church, synagogue and academy; and to instruct human beings-female and male-in whom they are, what roles they should play, and how they should behave. (1984, p. 116)



Patriarchal Christian Theology and Women

V. Bullough and B. Bullough (1974) in their work on the cultural sources of women's subordination include Christianity as one of the most pervasive shaping forces in Western cultures. They include its role in shaping Western institutions, laws, ideals, moral foundations and educational systems. For the Bulloughs, Christianity is a religion which has self-proclaimed its belief in love and charity while demonstrating strict asceticism and renunciation of the worlds of relationship and matter itself. Focusing less on the text and more on the post-biblical development of Christianity they identify both its generalized distrust or hatred of human sexuality and its more specific distrust or hatred of women's sexuality.

Quoting St. Athanasius, who believed that sexual celibacy and moral purity were identical and that virginity and chastity were the "supreme revelation and blessing brought into the world by Jesus" (Bullough & Bullough, p. 97), the authors claim that sexual continence rapidly became a major virtue and a major doctrine in Christian faith. Tertullian commented that a stain upon one's chastity was "more dreadful

than any punishment or any death" (p. 98). R. R. Ruether (1987) ascerbically comments upon such teachings that Jesus was not an ascetic and that we have no reason to believe that he commanded asceticism for his followers (p. 24). She does, however, acknowledge an implicit asceticism in St. Paul which she attributes to his belief in an early return of Jesus.

With such a stress on sexual continence, women provided special temptations to men and rapidly became associated with men's difficulties in maintaining a state of continence. Using Matt. 5:28 as a text indicating that sexual feelings and arousal were themselves evil, early Christian authors blamed women for their problem with purity. St. John Chrysostom rhetorically asked, "How often do we, from beholding a woman, suffer a thousand evils: returning home and entertaining an inordinate desire and experiencing anguish for many days?" (Bullough & Bullough, p. 97).

To early Christian scholars and exegetes, the scriptures themselves appeared to support a doctrine of feminine evil. Woman, in Genesis, was the creature who beguiled Adam. For example, Tertullian wrote that every woman was an Eve. Eve was the "devil's gateway, the unsealer of the forbidden tree" (p. 114). Eve was the first deserter of the divine law; "you are she who

persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man" (Bullough & Bullough, p. 114).

Tertullian's claim that man is made in God's image found support in 1 Cor. 11:3-9 where man is the image and the glory of God while woman is the glory of the man. Not all early fathers saw woman in even this favorable light. Methodius, Bishop of Olympus, wrote that woman is the daughter of Satan (p. 104).

In addition, the scriptures appeared to these early authors to support a doctrine of feminine evil and the essential, consequent subordination of women. 1 Cor. 11:3-9, for example, claimed that woman is of the man and created for the man. 1 Tim. 2:12 forbade the woman to speak in public worship and to ask her questions of her husband at home. Never was she to usurp her husband's authority over her. Eph. 5:22-25 admonished women that men had a headship role over women just as Jesus was the head of the church. Of the Pauline doctrine of original sin, Ruether (1987) writes that it is a Christian midrash on Genesis and is used to "reject women's ministry in the church and to mandate childbearing as woman's primary task. Through bearing children, women will be forgiven their primacy in sin" (p. 25). In a second article Ruether comments further:

The double definition of woman, as submissive body in the order of nature and "revolting" body in the disorder of sin, allows the Fathers to slide somewhat inconsistently from the second to the first and then attribute woman's inferiority first to sin and then to nature. (1974, p. 157)

For St. John Chrysostom, woman was a white sepulchre filled with pus and phlegm and all uncleanness. Men needed to regulate the woman, to mold and to tame her. The goal of such domestication was that she would learn to submit to and obey men (Bullough & Bullough, p. 115).

W. E. Phipps (1980) documents the works of St. Jerome and St. Augustine, two of the most influential theologians of the pre-medieval Christian Church. St. Jerome translated the early biblical languages into the Latin Vulgate, the authoritative text of the church for centuries. He was considered by the church to be an authoritative interpreter of the text. Jerome considered Adam and Eve and provided the following teaching:

As regards Adam and Eve, we must maintain that before the fall they were virgins in paradise; but after they sinned and were cast out of paradise they were immediately married. . . Always bear in mind that it was a woman who expelled the tiller of paradise from his heritage. (p. 41)

Phipps goes on to state,

Jerome presumes that he can proclaim on the authority of Moses not only that it is holier to be unwed but that a woman, whether virginal or not, is a cultic pollution hazard. Going beyond the Genesis story, which does not contain a

"curse" on woman, he believes that menstruation is a sign that Eve and her daughters have been cursed by God. "Nothing is so unclean as a woman in her periods," Jerome writes. Probably due to his influence a canon law was enacted in his time which banned women from the eucharistic altar. That law still remains operative in Roman Catholicism and is an unpublicized basis for reserving the offices of acolyte and priest for males. (p. 42)

Ruether (1987) critiques remaining vestiges of this issue of cultic (im)purity in which sexuality is viewed as contaminating the sacramental status of priests. She quotes a married priest, F. Bonnike, "The celibacy question in the Church is really a woman's issue. The institutional Church is somehow saying that my wife, other priest's wives and Eve, have corrupted priests who have married and somehow left them ministerially impotent" (p. 36).

It is likely, however, that another theologian than St. Jerome was more influential in Christianity's pervasive, continuing misogyny in the centuries that followed his work. St. Augustine, who in his personal life had a difficult time living in continence, wrote the dominant theology that would guide the Catholic Church for centuries. He declared, "Woman is not the image of God, for man alone is that image" (p. 67). Man's fall in original sin was occasioned by a woman,

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Eve. All humans conceived by sexual intercourse, therefore, all humans, are conceived in sin and inherit unruly genitals.

The medieval theologian, Thomas of Aquinas, according to Phipps, accepted Augustine's view of man's "unruly genitals" which did not obey reason. Ruether (1974) also comments, "If the male erection was the essence of sin, woman, as its source, became peculiarly the cause, object and extension of it. This . . . results in an essentially depersonalized view of the relationship to woman" (p. 163). In this view, the woman becomes, according to Ruether, an extension of the male body either in masturbation or intercourse, or as an incubator of the male implanted fetus. Phipps (1980) goes on, "By original sin, man lost his ability to control his private members and thus, by this inability, is the soul punished for its rebellion against God" (p. 71). Woman was created only to assist man in reproduction. Because procreation was the only desirable reason for intercourse, conception's possibility was used in ranking sin: masturbation and homosexuality were unnatural sins because conception could not result and therefore were graver sins than incest or rape which, because conception could result, were natural sins (1980, p. 72).

This depersonalized view of woman yielded three images for women's sexuality to the fathers: wholly whore, wholly wife, or wholly virgin (Ruether, p. 163). The whore represents depraved carnality; the wife is to "submit herself, mind and body totally to her husband, who is her "head" and has complete proprietary rights over her body, even to the point of physical abuse or death"; and the virgin becomes male by "crushing out of her being all vestiges of her bodily and her female nature" (pp. 163-165).

Ruether (1987) comments on the Church's anthropology which regarded women as lacking full human nature, an imperfect result of conception. In addition, the woman was in a state of subjugation to men because of her role in sin's entrance (original sin) into human life. As a consequence of this view, Thomas limited women to the domestic role and placed them under male authority. In maleness then the human becomes like Christ. "Lurking behind such sacramentalizing of maleness lies the Thomistic-Aristotelian anthropology which believed that women were imperfect humans and hence could not represent perfect or normative human nature" (p. 37).

To summarize, the patriarchal Christian view of creation is that man was created in God's image while the woman was created in the image of man. Eve's sin

accomplished that which the devil alone could not do: Eve caused Adam to sin. The resulting curse of God upon woman is that she is to be dominated by the man and is to be submissive to him. For as God created Adam as the head of woman and of earth's creation, woman was created to help and support the man.

Trible (1984) describes "this misogynous reading" which has acquired the "status of canonicity." In essence, a male God creates man first and woman second. Man thus takes priority and woman is secondary, subordinate and inferior. Woman is created for man to ease his loneliness. Woman is born of man rather than the usual birthing of all humanity by woman. Because she was taken from Adam's side, her status is derivative, not original. Man names woman as well as the animals and claims power over them. Woman tempted man successfully and is responsible for sin in the world. Pain in childbirth is a curse. Woman's sexual desire for her husband is designed by God to keep her submissive to her husband. Finally, God gives man the right to rule over the woman (p. 73).

Another issue in the story is that of obedience. God, as Creator of both garden and humans, established a boundary limit. The fruit of the tree of knowledge was not be eaten. Tribble says that "Life and Death is the subject of the narrative," in the context of a



limit. Eros is fulfillment within limits. In the Genesis account, "God decides life." and conversely, "God decides death." Tribble asserts, "Separating these two movements dominated by God is the participation of the plant, animal, and human worlds in disobedience. The plant world supplies the symbol of disobedience; the animal world provides the temptation; and the human world disobeys" (p. 75).

In much Christian usage of the Creation tradition, God's request for human obedience to God in the limit situation is an integral part of the story. Human response in disobedience to God's limitation is seen as responsible for the introduction of evil into human life. The patriarchal traditions which claim these scriptures as revelatory identify the woman as second-born in creation, as first in disobedience, and secondarily as temptress of the man. As such she becomes primary in evil. That evil, for many, perhaps most, Christian theologians, lay in her sexuality. As her body-presence created sexual desire, she was judged to be an Eve whose evil unabatedly continued in her body. Control of this evil meant that men needed to subjugate her in order that her chaos and pollution be contained. Because of her disobedience to God, she was

assigned to obey her counterpart in Creation, the human man. Of the consequences of this disobedience, Tribble writes that

union is no more; one flesh is split. The man will not reciprocate the woman's desire; instead he will rule over her. Thus she lives in unresolved tension. Where once there was mutuality, now there is a hierarchy of division. The man dominates the woman to pervert sexuality. Hence the woman is corrupted in becoming a slave, and the man is corrupted in becoming a master. His supremacy is neither a divine right nor a male prerogative. Her subordination is neither a divine decree nor the female destiny. Both their positions result from a shared disobedience. God describes this consequence but does not prescribe it as punishment. (1984, p. 128)

In one of her early writings, M. Daly (1973b) writes of this tradition of text and interpretation, "The Judaic-Christian tradition has functioned to legitimate male-dominated society" (p. 260). Born in a patriarchal society, the image then perpetuated further patriarchal societies. The oppression of women appeared, then, as "right and fitting" (p. 260). In the nature of things it became God's divine plan for society to be male-dominated. One result of this is the "mystification" of human roles. A man who dominates his wife believes he represents God himself. In such a context "God is male and male is God" (p. 261). To enforce this point of view, patriarchal religion has become authoritarian. A concept of faith and faithfulness is taught which allows no dissent.

"The believer is often commanded to assent blindly to doctrines handed down by authority (all male). The inculcation of anxieties and guilt feelings over heresy and losing the faith has been a powerful method used by institutional religion to immunize itself from criticism" (p. 262).

### Patriarchal Christianity and Obedience

P. Wilson-Kastner (1987), in an article written for clergy, discusses theological perspectives on sexual violence. She writes that it should surprise no one that women and children are the primary victims of sexual assault in Western cultures since socio-religious institutions over the Christian centuries have disempowered them.

Disempowerment of women within the Christian centuries has occurred as the Christian tradition has largely given mixed messages about sexuality, violence, and sexuality fused with violence. Some parts of the tradition such as the Song of Solomon represent the erotic equality of the man and woman. In sexual violence, however, the Old Testament view of rape is that it is a property crime against the woman's male guardian. This view does not consider the personal impact of rape upon the woman.

For example, in Tribble's book, Texts of Terror (1984), the concubine of Judg. 19: 1-30 is described. Her master, a Levite, "took for himself a woman, a concubine from Bethlehem of Judah" (p. 66). Tribble comments that he is the subject while she is the object (p. 66). Midway through the story, the Levite and his concubine, while traveling, are invited to stay overnight in the household of a stranger. Men of the city who wish to sexually violate the traveling Levite appear at the host's door. The host offers the men his own daughter and the concubine of his visitor, the Levite. He gives permission for the women to be violated in order to protect his male guest (cf Judg. 19:24). The Levite pushes his concubine out the door. Tribble translates the text, "And they raped . . . and tortured . . . her all night until the morning" (p. 76). The men of the city let the concubine go at dawn. She came back to the home of the host where she fell on his doorstep. In the morning the Levite finds her on the host's doorstep and calls to her. When she does not respond, he places her upon his donkey and travels on to his home. Upon reaching his home in Ephraim, he cut her body into twelve pieces and "sent her. . . throughout Israel" (p. 80). According to Tribble, the Greek and Hebrew texts are not unified

about whether the Levite murdered her or whether she died as a result of the night's assaults. Tribble comments:

Of all the characters in scripture, she is the least. Appearing at the beginning and close of a story that rapes her, she is alone in a world of men. Neither she nor the narrator recognizes her humanity. She is property, object, tool, and literary device. Without name, speech, or power, she has no friends to aid her in life or mourn her in death. Passing her back and forth among themselves, the men of Israel have obliterated her totally. Captured, betrayed, raped, tortured, murdered, dismembered, and scattered--this woman is the most sinned against. (pp. 80-81)

Regarding New Testament images of obedience, Wilson-Kastner (1987), for example, discusses the relationship of God as father and Jesus as son of God. Jesus, in the gospels, became an obedient sacrifice for the sins of others. She describes an image of God which emerged over the centuries. "The popular image of a father-god who killed his own son to satisfy his own anger, and who was able to reward or punish his whole creation to do his will, served to reinforce the image of power as coercive and even intrusive" (p. 99).

As early Christians and medieval Christians interpreted Christ's obedience to the Father-God, they often focused upon the need for human obedience to Him as well. For Christians to avoid encounters with God's anger and His retribution, strict obedience was

demanding of the faithful. Not only actions were to be obedient, but the internal heart was to be obedient as well.

Some Christian traditions urge victims of violence and overpowering by another to be meek, forgiving, submissive and obedient. For women, much of this faithful obedience was expected to be transferred to human men who represented God on earth. Men, in their varying human roles of father, spouse, or church father, became responsible to control women.

A contemporary example of this theology is found in the evangelical feminist magazine, Daughters of Sarah, in its issue on "Violent Hermeneutics" (1980).

L. Scanzoni and B. Evans Wells write:

"Do you think God will forgive me if I get a divorce?" asked Joan . . . "All the other counselors told me I'd be out of God's will if I left Tom. Yet, I don't see any other way, and I'm desperate. I'm afraid to stay with him. And I worry about our daughter. (p. 8)

Joan's story was one of repeated beatings and sadistic sexual practices at the hands of her husband. Each time she attempted to find help from clinical or church-related counselors, she was advised that she needed to forgive her husband and submit to his sexual demands. "It's your Christian duty," she was told. (p. 8) Occasionally her husband would go with her to see a counselor. However, soon after the appointments

he would again beat or rape her. During one episode of violence, Joan needed suturing for severe head injuries. "Even so," she was told by a minister, "You must continue to submit to your husband, including sexually. Your husband is the one who answers to God. You answer to your husband. You must leave your husband's sins with God" (p. 8).

After that session, a distressed Joan stopped going to counselors. For a year she refused to have sex with her husband. Then, to her horror, she learned that Tom was sexually molesting their twelve-year old daughter! Once again, Joan sought counsel--only to be told that she had no one but herself to blame! "If you had been the kind of wife you should have been, he never would have started this thing with your daughter. You must stop refusing him." (p. 8)

Scanzoni and Wells quote radio personality and evangelical Christian psychologist, Clyde Narramore. In his book, The Submissive Wife: God's Ideal and the Practical Facts (1978), Narramore addresses the Christian woman whose husband is hostile and violent. Quoting 1 Pet. 2:20-21 he urges wives to willingly endure suffering as part of their Christian life (Scanzoni & Wells, pp. 11-12). Narramore, interpreting New Testament scripture, writes what the Bible does not say.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands if they are the kind of men they should be." Neither does Ephesians 5:33 admonish a wife to "reverence her husband if he deserves to be revered." (Scanzoni & Wells, pp. 11-12)

In her discussion of Christian obedience, the noted German feminist theologian, D. Soelle (1982, 1984), casts light upon one pertinent result of a theology of God and creation in the tradition of oppressive Christianity. That issue is the one of obedience. She states that as a German, as a Christian, and as a woman she has confronted issues of obedience. She locates her own painful, shameful awareness of obedience as an issue in the German holocaust, directed at European Jews. She asks, after the holocaust, if it is possible to use the word obedience as if "nothing had happened" (1982, p. x). She writes, "Blind obedience in which people give up their reason and conscience to someone else is not limited to specific nations" (p. xii). Blind obedience to government is linked in Soelle's work to familial obedience. This, in turn is linked to the demand for obedience to God. Religious traditions which strongly emphasize the father's authority provide three structural elements to this obedience: (1) acceptance of a superior power which controls destiny and excludes self-determination; (2) the rule of power needs no moral legitimation in love and justice as it demands subjection; and (3) pessimistic views of humans in which they are seen as powerless, meaningless and incapable of truth and love (p. xii).



Soelle suggests that this type of required obedience presupposes human duality: there is one who speaks with authority and one who listens and obeys in submission (p.xiii). Power, rather than love, truth or justice, becomes important in the relationship of speaker and listener. Domination, unquestioned authority and obedience result from such a system.

In addition to her experiences in Germany and in an authoritarian church, Soelle describes the third source of oppression, that of her sexual identity as a woman. About this oppression she concludes, "any identification with the aggressor, the ruler, the violator, is the worst thing that can happen to a woman" (p. xix). Soelle ends her book's foreword with the comment that "beyond obedience there is resistance. . . . obedience works for Death and resistance for Life" (p. xxii).

In meeting the "pared down Christ" of the Christian tradition, one meets immediately the concept of obedience. To be a good Christian, one needs to be in a posture of obedience to those who rule over one. Since the early Christian era, obedience has been given the central position in Christian doctrine and worship. Soelle, to illustrate her concern, quotes a 1927 work by Baumgartner in which he wrote:

So most assuredly the time will return when obedience-that is, the submission to authority, full compliance without questioning motives, the simple telling and presenting of holy things rather than the endless asking and answering of questions-will freely be acknowledged and practiced as the basis of all religious training. (Soelle, 1982, p. 8)

Soelle despairs that his message of obedience has become the critical core of the entire Christian message. She responds, "Is it actually possible, in the realities of daily life, to distinguish between the obedience which is due God and that obedience toward people which we can and ought with good reason refuse?" (p. 10).

Structurally, for Soelle, obedience reflects an imbalance of power. The weaker person fears the overarching strength of the stronger. Anticipation of intimidation, as well as actual enacted intimidation, leads to habitual obedience. The relationship is not reversible except by forceful action on the part of the subordinate. Images of the superior come in verbal language as father, ruler, owner, master, commander while images of the subordinate appear as child, subject, or slave (pp. 11-12). In Christian faith, historically, obedience has been related to method rather than content. The manner in which one was obedient took precedence over specific components of the demand for obedience. For example in the Rule of St. Benedict, "One should obey--without hesitation,

without contradiction, without murmuring, without inner resistance, joyfully and quickly, always relinquishing all voluntas propria" (p. 14). In this understanding, obedience becomes the goal rather than the way to a goal. In this model, the word, "why," is forgotten. "Once a person has been trained to be habitually obedient, the authoritarian, non-objective model functions, even under the control of other masters" (p. 17). In addition to Soelle's concern for why, I would add, the word, "no" is significantly absent as a real interpersonal possibility as well.

What, then, are the results of religious and cultural demands for obedience by women? In 1984, Soelle identifies the outcome of patriarchal colonization of women as the destruction of women's outlook on life. In a status of colonization, women experience themselves as weak, impotent, helpless, and powerless. Such women are not permitted to recognize their limited status. Women are not permitted to think, to develop personal abilities, or to consider the self and its needs along with the needs of others; the colonized woman's life is destroyed. Soelle, in these two books contends it is the Christian church which continues women's oppression.

Soelle (1982) indicts the Adam and Eve story. God at the end of the story drives the sinful disobedient

pair out of the garden to prohibit them from access to the tree of life and becoming like gods. She demands to know

what kind of a God is that, whose major interests have to be described in these terms? A being who is addressed as "Lord," a being whom his theologians have to describe as all-powerful because he cannot be satisfied with being merely powerful. (p. 97)

Soelle urges feminist theologies to critique this god of the phallogentric accumulation of power. If this God's main interest is total independence and love of power, women would do well not to worship nor to love him (p. 97). A female piety of enslavement in which women "knuckle under" to a benevolent master leads them to submission and obedience. This then destroys them from the full possibility of becoming human (p. 100). Another concept of God is essential, other symbols for God critical, because women have suffered and now do suffer insults and humiliation in a culture dependent upon the all-powerful God who demands submission and obedience. Women, as well as men, who seek to find God, must give up obedience to find solidarity. They must give up relationships of domination and enslavement, seeking to become one as equals. Quoting Meister Eckhart on mystical union, "We become quit of the God who commands and dominates" (p. 105).

From the perspective of social psychology, Soelle's theological concern appears warranted. S. Milgram (1974) comments that the dilemma of obedience to external authority is as ancient as the sacred Jewish and Christian text. He writes, "In every case where the problem is not merely academic there is a real person who must obey or disobey authority, a concrete instance when the act of defiance occurs" (p. xii). He further comments that when willingness to obey is present without an atmosphere of force, obedience is "colored by a cooperative mood." However, when the "threat of force or punishment is present, obedience is compelled by fear" (pp. xii - xiii).

Because obedience functions as a basic element in the structuring of human social life; as a requirement of communal living, all humans must, at times, respond in obedience or defiance to commands of others. Obedience, for Milgram, becomes the "psychological mechanism that links individual action to political purpose. It is the dispositional cement that binds men [sic] to systems of authority" (p. 1).

Describing the philosophical history of obedience, Milgram comments that conservative philosophers argue that disobedience threatens the fabric of society. However, humanists argue for the primacy of individual conscience in overriding authority. Identifying his

own awareness with H. Arendt's phrase, "the banality of evil," Milgram suggests that ordinary people become agents in a "terrible, destructive process" (p. 6).

The force exerted by the moral sense of the person is less effective than social myth would have us believe. . . . Moral factors can be shunted aside with relative ease by a calculated re-structuring of the informational and social field. (p. 7)

In his assessment of the willingness of Europeans to cooperate with the Nazi campaign against Jews, Milgram identifies the intense devaluation of victims before any action began. For more than a decade prior to the beginning of the resettlements to camps, anti-Jewish propaganda dehumanized the Jews, denying to them the full status of humanity. Milgram states, "Systematic devaluation of the victim provides a measure of psychological justification for brutal treatment of the victim" (p. 9). In addition, once victimization has taken place, people devalue the victim "as a consequence [emphasis his] of acting against him [sic]" (p. 10). In a variety of ways, political control of others is achieved by action. Feelings, untransformed into action, are largely irrelevant (p. 10). "Tyrannies are perpetuated by diffident men who do not possess the courage to act out their beliefs" (p. 10).

Thus, the problem of obedience, for Milgram, "is not wholly psychological. The form and shape of

society and the way it is developing have much to do with it" (p. 11). In a society with hierarchical structures--and for Milgram all society appears hierarchical--obedience contributes to stabilization of that society (pp. 123-124). Obedience, therefore, has evolutionary origins. "Men [sic] obey because they have an instinct for it" (p. 125). In their lives within social systems, individuals are not excused from their functions in maintaining the system. Within a system of hierarchical control, the individual defines himself [sic] "in a social situation in a manner that renders him [sic] open to regulation by a person of higher status. In this condition the individual no longer views himself [sic] as responsible for his [sic] own actions but defines himself [sic] as an instrument for carrying out the wishes of others" (p. 134).

The antecedent conditions for obedience, then, include the following. There are familial structures of authority in which a specific command is taught to the child as a moral imperative and by means of which the child is trained to comply with the authority of others. The implicit command of any explicit command, is "And, obey me" (p. 136). Secondly, there are societal (institutional) structures in which an organizational framework of authority exists. Discipline is used to enforce submission to requests

for compliance. Again the implicit message is one of obedience. Reward structures function to reinforce compliance while failure to comply results in punishment. About this complex process of shaping the individual to obey in social groupings, Milgram comments that "The net result of this experience is the internalization of the social order [emphasis his] -that is, internalizing the set of axioms by which social life is conducted" (p. 138). In the same way that grammatical rules function to regulate language-based communication, internalized axioms guide social behavior. For the obedient personality, the key axiom appears to be, "Do what the man in charge says" (p. 138).

In any given situation, there are also immediate antecedent conditions to obedience. First, there is the perception in the subordinate individual of someone with authority, some-one who is in a position of social control within any given situation. The authority person's power stems from other's perception of his or her position in a social structure. She or he is seen as in charge. In addition, external accouterments are used to signify authority. The person in charge is seen as related directly to the subject in subordination.



Milgram states there is always a transition moment when the subject stands outside the legitimate demands of an authority situation. The individual moves across the boundary separating outside and inside. An example of this transition moment might be found among young men or women who are to be inducted into the army. Before they cross the boundary between ordinary citizen and boot camp inductee, they are outside the legitimate influence of the drill instructor. After their induction ceremony, they have crossed the boundary and are now inside that influence. Milgram writes, "Authority systems are frequently limited by a physical context, and often we come under the influence of an authority when we cross the physical threshold into his [sic] domain" (p. 140).

In addition, people in situations of coerced authority, such as situations with guns, comply with authority, but the nature of their obedience is limited to the extent of the authority person's capacity for implementing sanctions against them. However, persons in situations of voluntary obedience to external authority have an internalized basis for obedience in addition to externalized ones (pp. 140-141).

Finally, the overarching ideology of a social system functions to lend legitimacy to demands for control. Describing the experimental process as an

example of internalized ideology, Milgram states research subjects never cry out in a bewildered fashion, "I never heard of science. What do you mean by experiment?" (p. 142). In today's culture a variety of institutions legitimize science. Regarding social legitimation, Milgram comments of institutions that each "is justified by the values and needs of society, and also, from the standpoint of the typical person, accepted because they exist as part of the world in which he [sic] is born and grows up" (p. 142). An authority system thus functions with a minimum of two persons who share the culturally based expectation that one of them has the ability to dictate behavior for the other and to exact compliance.

From his research, Milgram asks what must the obedient member of an authority system do in order to move to a stance of defiance. When the person breaks from obedience to disobedience, he must, according to Milgram, say, "Everything I have done to this point is bad, and I now acknowledge it by breaking off" (p. 149). In addition, the subject must breach implicit sets of understandings which are part of the social encounter or situation. If every situation is built upon a working consensus between participants, then defiance breaks down that consensus, the expected social etiquette of the situation. Milgram states that

the most basic aspect of that etiquette does not concern the content of what transpires between them,

but rather the maintenance of the structural relations between them. Such relations can be those of equality or of hierarchy. When the occasion is defined as one of hierarchy, any attempt to alter the defined structure will be experienced as a moral transgression and will evoke anxiety, shame, embarrassment, and diminished feelings of self-worth. (p 152)

When a subordinate person in an authority system contemplates moving to a position of disobedience from one of obedience, high anxiety is experienced.

Functioning as a barrier to the decision to disobey, this anxiety represents ambivalence and stress. The subject must pass through this emotional barrier in order to defy commands of the authority figure.

However, once disobedience begins to be enacted, the anxiety disappears (p. 152).

Disobedience, as the act which does not come easily, reformulates the relationship between the dominant and subordinate person (p. 162). In its enactment, there is apprehension about an, as yet, undefined retribution. Milgram hypothesizes that the disobedience sequence begins with inner doubt and dissent. Next there is an effort to verbally externalize doubt and dissent, along with a threat to refuse to carry out orders. Finally, there is the act of disobedience, the refusal to submit. "The act of

disobedience requires a mobilization of inner resources, and their transformation. . . into the domain of action. But the psychic cost is considerable" (p. 163).

### Obedience and Rape

The juxtaposition of twentieth-century obedience research with twenty centuries of Christian teachings about obedience raises interesting questions about the role of obedience socialization in women's responses to a rape event.

P. Bart and P. H. O'Brien (1985) published findings from their comparative study of women who avoided rape ( $n = 51$ ) with those who did not ( $n = 43$ ). They identify four factors, among their research subjects, in women's early life experiences which correlate with avoidance of rape in adulthood. They summarize these factors in the following manner: "So these four factors--mother's education, parental intervention in childhood aggression, football playing, and growing up with a nontraditional image of one's future--support the feminist theory about rape" (p. 106).

They identify applicable feminist theories about rape. These include the feminist belief that female

socialization sets up a situation in which women will be raped rather than avoid rape when attacked. Throughout the girl child's socialization process she is taught that deference to male authority is desirable; that winning by losing is more feminine than winning by winning; and that physical stamina is not valued as a feminine characteristic.

Bart and O'Brien report that women who avoided rape were larger in both size and height; they were more apt to have played contact sports such as football in childhood; their mothers had more post-secondary education; they were allowed the freedom of physical fighting in childhood without adult intervention; they were often oldest daughters (not only children); two-thirds had never been married; their career aspirations were not for marriage and the nuclear family alone but also included paid employment as essential to them. In addition, many of the women who avoided rape mentioned women in public life whom they admired (pp. 105-107). The presence of a weapon in the rape situation was not necessarily correlated with actually being raped. Successful resistance strategies were active rather than passive. Fleeing, physical resistance and force, and screaming were more effective than talking, pleading or crying. Use of multiple strategies and flexible shifting from a non-effective strategy into a

second or third or fourth also equated with rape avoidance. Women who avoided rape reported experiencing a gut reaction of rage that someone would intrude upon them by a sexual assault and consequently were more determined to avoid rape than they were afraid of death or mutilation (pp. 107-108). Finally, competent women (women who knew first aid, self-defense and how to handle common emergencies) were more likely to avoid rape in an assault situation. In short, women who avoided rape were disobedient women in at least two senses: they did not meet cultural stereotypes of femininity before the assault and they actively resisted the rapist with force and cunning during it.

Bart and O'Brien believe that women should be actively taught about rape avoidance. They should learn self-defense, especially courses designed to teach them dirty street fighting. They should learn to stay calm under attack and continue using all possibilities of resistance. They should be taught negotiating techniques if rape appears inevitable so that they might attempt to ameliorate the most severe components of that rape. Children should be encouraged to play vigorous contact sports. Women should continue to play them in adulthood. Girl children should not be forced into the nice, weak, incompetent, little girl role nor should women seek to enact it. Women also

need to learn that their rage at "smaller" bodily violations is valuable. Women need to believe that no one has the right to violate them. Thus, rage has an educative function for women.

Bart and O'Brien's research, along with that of Milgram, counters the prevailing patriarchal doctrines of proper womanhood as submissive, compliant, obedient, childlike and docile. It rather promulgates a break through the anxiety barrier between psychic dissent and enacted dissent; it promulgates the attitude as well as the act of disobedience. That which is commanded is not to be automatically obeyed. Women need to be taught to consider immediate resistance as a viable possibility in a rape situation. They need to learn that active, physical resistance does not automatically yield death.

## Chapter 6

### Pornography and the Function of Women

We need to know the writing of the past, and know it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us.

Adrienne Rich

When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision

### Introduction

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, P. Reage (nee Regina de Forges) wrote O's story for her lover. In 1975, the book's author claimed it was originally written to seduce a specific male lover and that it was published only after his urging her to do so. The first sixty pages of the novel, according to its author, just flowed from years of sexual fantasizing. The remainder of the book is a carefully scripted conclusion. I find it interesting that in criticism of this novel, no one mentions the decades just past for Reage. The 1930s and 1940s in much of Europe were decades of military conquest and occupation by the Nazi regime. Torture and sexual degradation of men and women were major political weapons of these years in



Nazi controlled Europe.\* Certainly the violence of that era must have affected the inner and outer lives of persons who lived through the war into the postwar years. Yet, neither Reage nor her critics remark upon the proximity of her novel's appearance in the early 1950s to the preceding decade of war and occupation.

Published in Paris in 1954, the book won the Prix des Deux Magots in 1955. Following its publication there was much speculation about the author's gender and actual identity since the book was published pseudonymously. Assuming the book to have a female author, which in fact it does, J. Paulham of the French Academy discusses O as decent, pure and as having a decisive spirit. In his critical work on the story of O, Paulham writes that O admits to that which her lesser sisters still deny

that they never cease obeying their nature, the call of their blood, that everything in them is sex. That they have constantly to be nourished, constantly washed, and made up, constantly beaten. That all they need is a good master, one who is not too lax or kind: for the moment we make any show of tenderness they draw upon it, turning all the zest, joy, and character at their command to make others love them. In short, that we must, when we go to see them, take a whip along. (Reage, 1965, p. xii)

Critics in Europe and America discussed its religious nature in repeated debates about whether the book was art or pornography. O's story, according to Paulham, is one of mystical fanaticism that never

ceases to blow. Her total submission to the masters who dominate her is one of pure obedience, an obedience that never questions their rights with her body.

A. P. de Mandiarques draws parallels between O's obedience and that of the mystics. O's absolute abandonment of choice becomes a pure mysticism in which mind or soul totally dominates flesh. Underneath the book's overt story of erotic desire, its subject is the "tragic flowering of a woman in the abdication of her freedom, in willful slavery, in humiliation, in the prostitution imposed upon her by her masters, in torture, and even in the death, which . . . she requests" (Reage, 1965, p. xxxii). O's story, thus, is often seen as one of complete spiritual transformation, of ascesis.

A. Dworkin (1974, pp. 55-56), reviewing literary criticism of O's story, identifies O as a Christ figure who exemplifies pure suffering and pure love. O incarnates service to others and self-sacrifice. She becomes the sacrifice that will sanctify the men who possess and control her. O's sacrifice of self is commanded by her lover Rene and she submits.

J. Benjamin (1980) makes a similar analysis of O's motivation. Through the abuse which she receives, O is searching for an "ultimately unattainable spiritual or psychological satisfaction" (p. 156). O desires

subordination not the experience of pain. "Her experience has a religious quality" (p. 159). In the ritualistic violation of her body, O experiences her lover as a god "whom she adores and cannot stand to be parted from" (p. 160). Benjamin comments that in Western theology God represents "the ultimate oneness, the ability to stand alone" (p. 160). Abandonment by God "is experienced as punishment and as an indication of guilt" (p. 160). In relation to her god, Rene, O "represents abject dependency, the inability to tolerate separation and aloneness" (p. 160). Benjamin believes that O finds transcendence, a loss of self, in her suffering. She turns to submission, and its consequent suffering, to transcend her aloneness (pp. 160-161).

D. Poggi (1981) analyzes O's historical place in literary criticism:

Women supposedly love to be forced, humiliated, whipped and above all raped. When the Story of O came out, L'Express wrote, "A woman has finally decided to admit, 'I like being beaten.' The conclusion to be drawn from this, once again in L'Express, 'The Story of O is woman's future.' What then is this future which awaits us and in which our bodies will bloom? A world of chains, whips, violent coitus; A world in which we will belong not just to one man, but to all men, who will pass us around to one another like pieces of merchandise; a world in which we will be happy in complying with rules established by our masters, who love us passionately for our docility. (pp. 76-77)

O's story begins as she and her lover, Rene, enter a cab. He undresses her allowing her to wear only shoes, a blouse, and a skirt. Taking her to Roissy, a men's secret sexual society, he introduces her as the girl he has brought. He instructs her to obey and leaves. As soon as she is inside the estate, O is fitted with a leather collar and leather bracelets. All other clothing are removed. Following a meal in which she is forbidden to touch herself, she is taken to the library where four men, one of whom is her lover, take turns raping her. Following the rapes, her lover instructs that she be beaten. At the conclusion of this brutal beating, she is again raped. The men instruct O that at night she will be beaten and during the day she will do household chores. At any time she is to grant instant access to her body. "Your hands are not your own, nor are your breasts, nor, most especially any of your bodily orifices which we may explore or penetrate at will" (Reage, 1965, p. 17).

The purpose of her sexual degradation is to teach O that through her suffering she is never to be free. Eventually she will without hesitation be immediately obedient to any command. The estate will teach her to be dedicated to something outside herself. Total, instantaneous obedience is expected. When she is unable to obey, previous obedience will be assumed to

lend her consent. Once violence against her begins, the men will decide when to stop. Any cries or protests from her will be assumed to be due to her female weakness.

Near the conclusion of this first night of violence, Rene's lover demands that she fellate him and say, "I love you." She kneels in front of him and caresses him. Reage writes:

O felt that her mouth was beautiful since her lover condescended to thrust himself into it, since he deigned publicly to offer caresses to it, since finally he discharged into it. She received it as a god is received, she heard him cry out, heard the others laugh, and when she had received it, she fell, her face against the floor. . . . She did not want to die, but if torture was the price she had to pay to keep her lover's love, then she only hoped he was pleased that she had endured it. (Reage, 1965, pp. 19,28)

Rene then asks her to consent to more degradation. He will give her to other men for even worse tortures. Stating her total obedience is necessary for his love, he then claims her body. Stating that her body-self is never again to belong to her but only to the men who chose to use it, he imposes a rule of silence. Only in screams and tears is she to use her voice. Never in normal speaking is she again to speak. Eventually, she is displayed, now totally silent, in the garden on an owl perch while others come to look at her complete degradation, her complete submission to her masters.

Reage has written a perversely moral book. In its morality, O's woman-flesh is punished. Her nature is controlled. Her sexuality is domesticated. O is tamed and trained by her masters to obey without question.

In a published 1975 conversation about the book, Reage commented upon the book and her philosophy that "Abandon is the ideal. Letting oneself go implies complete confidence in the person you love, abandoning yourself completely to your destiny, the acceptance, if you prefer, of your self and others" (de Forges, 1975, p. 54).

She later commented that the body exists to be trained and controlled. "The destruction [of the body] is inherent in Creation, because everything is made in order to be destroyed, to be discarded, to not endure" (pp. 90-91). O's love is pure because it remains constant through all forms of enforced debauchery. Reage then claims that we all search for this purity of love, this absoluteness of love that endures (p. 73).

Thus, the woman's body is to be tamed. Submission and obedience are necessary traits in pure love. True abandonment is the trusting gift of oneself to the loved one, reserving nothing for oneself. Separation from the lover is worse than any other reality, including injustice, for separation is hell (de Forges, 1975, p. 26).

The Story of O is celebrated both as pornography and as literature. Its hold on the psyche's of male and female readers is intense. O's story reflects cultural themes. Her story taps into human consciousness. She surfaces our most intense longings and fears--longings for fusion in love and fears of separation. Some of those longings and fears have been nurtured by centuries of religious teachings about the bloody, suffering, obedient Christ who embodied total trust in God and total submission to God's will. Humans, in following the suffering Christ, were also taught to obey. Women, especially, in this tradition have been taught silence, obedience, submission and suffering as part of their faithful love toward Christ.

In O's story creation itself is perverted. Eroticism is encountered in violence (de Forges, 1975, p. 92). The role of female sexuality is to create and satiate male arousal. As part of her relationship with men, she is to be disciplined and controlled (pp. 23, 27-28). O's story reveals no understanding of the female body as created in God's image. Instead Rene is the only god present in the story. He is the initiator of her torment.

In her story Reage stands securely within Christendom's tradition of feminine evil. She simply rewrites the story in a more profane manner. The

woman-who-is-evil must be punished. Her submission will be brought about by her suffering. By her suffering, the man's salvation is accomplished. The woman's purity of suffering love is a sanctifying power. That the woman loses her body and her self is a natural consequence flowing from her love of the man. Of O, Reage later writes, "O is actually the incarnation of a pure love that remains pure through all manner of debauchery. We are all in search of this absolute love" (de Forges, 1975, p. 73).

#### The Pornographic Story of Woman's Nature

The literary and visual artifacts of pornography reveal a mythic story of women and their relationships with men. The pornographic image of sexuality is one which preoccupies many groups; feminist women, neo-conservative Christians and a wide assortment of governmental agencies. In his historical tracing of obscenity and pornography, W. Kendrick (1987) traces modern sensibilities through sexually explicit literature and art. Beginning with the 1745 discovery of the artifacts of Pompeii and their subsequent role in sexual ideas, Kendrick's book documents a multifaceted history of today's debate about the relative merits of pornography.



Noting that the word pornography first appeared in English language dictionaries in the 19th century and initially was applied to the scientific or pseudo-scientific study of prostitutes, Kendrick hypothesizes that the rise of literacy, the breakdown of class structures, and the ready availability of popular literature all contribute to the rise of pornography as it now exists in Western societies. Sexually explicit material has always been available in Western cultures but historically it belonged to wealthy men. As such, it did not jeopardize the public's moral sensitivities. Access was forbidden to the poor, to the young and to the female.

Sociocultural changes from the Victorian era to the modernist one included the increasing accessibility of sexually explicit representations, in words and visual images, to the general public. For pornography to exist in the public's imagination, the individual needed to be able to conceptualize sex "in its own right, sorting it out from the moral, legal, and religious contexts in which it had hitherto been embedded" (p. 65). Following that shift in human consciousness about sex, Kendrick claims the late twentieth century has come to view sex as "advanced calisthenics" (p. 65).

One of the continuing debates in pornography revolves around this question of the context of sex. On one hand there is the argument that sees sex as a "self-contained activity with no necessary impact on other aspects of its participants' lives" (p. 65). On the other hand is the argument that sex is "so complexly interwoven with the rest of life as to be separable only by fraud or violence" (p. 65).

Describing the impact of A. Comstock on legislation and social practice in the United States, Kendrick claims that his was a return to a much earlier elitism. In that elitism it was the universal dissemination of sexual information that was feared. Left unpoliced and unrestricted by the dominating class, he believed sexual information or representations would breed chaos and decay. Representations of sexual practices, in word or artifact, therefore must be contained. The underlying fear was that indiscriminate dissemination of sexual materials would bring obscene art to the common person (pp. 145-147). The fear, of course, is that by shedding light on the obscure corners of human life for those who have been unaware, one builds knowledge that has the potential to seduce others to mimic obscenity in real life (p. 18).

Socio-political criticism of pornography has identified it as devoted to anarchy, to the overthrow of political systems. Pornography, according to Kendrick, has always inspired anxiety in the wielders of political power. It functions as a symbol for anarchy. "On the surface, pornography threatens nothing but the unleashing of sexuality; but that unleashing . . . turns immediately into wantonness of every other kind, including the promiscuous redistribution of property" (p. 219-220). This fear, according to Kendrick, is at the core of the debate over pornography. When he claims that pornography was available to the rich who collected it for their private libraries, Kendrick does not appear to notice, nor to address, the obvious ambiguity that wealthy owners of pornography were thus the ones who feared it's revolutionary power.

Secondly, the proliferation of pornography is seen as harming a man's conduct in the same way that great art and literature ennoble it. Kendrick remarks:

The supposedly ennobling effect of good words and and pictures is, however, inseparable from the supposedly harmful effects of bad ones. . . . if we accepted the innocuousness of pornography, we would have to ascribe equal impotence to our most treasured cultural inheritances--including religious texts and pictures. The result is unthinkable: we would find ourselves bereft of our myths of instruction, compelled to reexamine the very bases of our entire religious, educational, and political systems. (p. 220)

Kendrick argues that "the medium of which a representation is made--print, paint, film, and so on--produces its deepest effects irrespective of what is being represented," because it is the medium that both shapes and controls human consciousness in associations and actions (p. 221). Thus, the presence of sexual content in a book or film tends to obscure the character of that book or film as influential in shaping human perceptual organization. This leads Kendrick to conclude that

our culture's ability to grasp technological innovations, to accommodate them morally and ethically, lags behind the progress of technology itself. This discrepancy is especially apparent in the area of pornography, which has kept in step with the development of new media." (p. 222)

Pornography, which prior to 1970 occupied a nearly subterranean position in North American life, has now become readily available to all who wish to access it. Moving from an under-the-counter phenomenon in selected stores, the pornographic word or image is now on view on counter tops in many stores. Women and children, as well as men, are repetitively confronted with blatant sexual imagery. The supposed line between artful erotica and pornography grows ever more fuzzy and unclear. Pornographic images of one year are likely to emerge as advertising's freshest and most startling copy in the next. Within the past thirty

years pornography's presence has moved from girlie calendars and cheap books to movies, videos, cable television and special telephone numbers. Explicit sexual violence fills creative works of this decade. Prestigious institutions of research and teaching utilize pornographic materials as a methodology for introducing human sexuality curricula. Representations of woman's image in sexually explicit forms are everywhere. Her sexualized image sells cars, televisions, machinery for well-drilling, clothing for both men and women, and a multitude of other items as well.

Speaking of the power of representation, C. MacKinnon writes of the epistemology of objectification "that the objectively knowable is object" (1983, p. 250). "Sexual objectification is the primary process of the subjection of women. It unites act with word, construction with expression, perception with enforcement, myth with reality. Man fucks woman; subject verb object" (p. 253).

Much of political America views pornography as an issue of community sensibility or as a constitutional freedom of speech issue. Freedom to portray the erotic has not been seen as representation of violent obscenity (MacKinnon, p. 242). The specter of censorship becomes a core motif in any debate about the

presence of pornography in American life.

Pornography's right to exist without censorship or control is defended by those who believe that any attempt at censorship violates the constitutionally guaranteed freedoms of speech and the press (Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, 1986; Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, 1970).

As the first feminist critiques of pornography surfaced, a new consciousness began to emerge among women that perhaps pornography was harmful to them. The politics of pornography began to be linked to the politics of rape. The dangers of rape are bi-modal to women. The possibility of rape teaches a woman to domesticate her movements in areas where she believes she is vulnerable to rape. Actual rape assaults her existence, violates her body-space and may lead to her murder. The possibility of rape limits her movement and freedom.

Pornography also has a bi-modal danger for women. As it frees violent images and metaphors into the common consciousness of men and women, it signals the message of women's sexual objectification. The pornographic image signals a woman's continuous sexual accessibility. Violent pornography transmits the message that men, to be men, can successfully accomplish sexual control of the woman by force.

In pornography, virgins and sexually experienced women are both whores. The virgin is to be forced and conquered, thereby transforming her sexual naivete into sexual experience. Sexually experienced women are whores by virtue of their previous sexual encounters. Whoredom of all women is assumed; it is either potential whoredom or actual. Women, in a paradigm which romanticizes sexual exploitation of women, are viewed as enjoying violent sexual encounters. Pornography colludes with and promotes the message that all women want to be sexually conquered by force. Pornography's educational message to men is that women welcome sexual violence and that manliness involves the sexual conquest of women.

Pornography's more subtle image and message is its internal one for women. As women perceive cultural messages about force and violence, they are terrorized into submission. Pornography in its educational function for women teaches them that they are to be sexually accessible and that sexual violence is normal. Women authors (Dworkin, 1981; Griffin, 1981) note women's obsessive fascination with the pornographic image.

In the prologue to her book on pornography, S. Griffin (1981) comments that women ought to be surprised by pornography because they are not usually

its readers or viewers. Yet, upon reading or viewing, the woman is "shocked only by a shock of recognition." That shock recognizes that women "knew all these attitudes before (though we did not know, or did not want to know this mind [the pornographic mind] would 'go so far' " (p. 3).

Feminist authors (Benjamin, 1980; Daly, 1978, Dworkin, 1974, 1981; Griffin, 1981; Lederer, 1980) identify pornography's role in perpetuating male dominance and control. Pornography is oriented to men's power over women. As such its messages diminish a woman's self-definition as a sexual person. While in rape, women experience helplessness and terror, in pornography they learn that this is the way male-female relatedness is supposed to be. Pornography, like rape, disempowers women. American journalist and feminist activist G. Steinem writes of pornographic images:

[Women] have to take up the equally complex burden of explaining that all nonprocreative sex is not alike. We have a motive: our right to a uniquely human sexuality, and sometimes even to survival. As it is, our bodies have too rarely been our own to develop erotica in our own lives, much less in art and literature. And our bodies have too often been the objects of pornography and the woman-hating, violent practices that it preaches. Consider also our spirits that break a little each time we see ourselves in chains or in full labial display for the conquering male viewer, bruised or on our knees, screaming a real or pretended pain to delight the sadist, pretending to enjoy what we don't enjoy, to be blind to the images of our



sisters that really haunt us, --humiliated often ourselves by the truly obscene idea that sex and the domination of women must be combined. (Lederer, 1980, p. 25)

Dworkin (1981) maintains that pornography, like rape, provides a way for men to possess and control women as objects. Male desires, in the pornographic paradigm, are entitled to fulfillment. Male power, not sexuality, is the major motif of men's pornography. In pornographic representations, men are asserting male power. Dworkin argues that in pornography the male's aggressive, "I am." has a corollary assertion to the woman, "You are not" (1981, p. 10). In pornographic representations, the woman lacks a real and human self. She is a body to be used.

Dworkin identifies various forms of male power by which men possess women. The power to say, "I am," of himself while saying of the woman, "You are not." is the power of self-other naming. In addition, the man's superior physical strength is a form of power which he can use against the woman. Since the power of physical strength cannot be demonstrated unless it is directed against those who are weaker. If a man's real power lies in his body's power, then to be made visible to others, it must be enacted (pp. 14-15). Therefore, it

is natural for men to want to physically dominate women. To be strong, they must demonstrate their strength.

Men are biologically "aggressive, combative, antagonistic, cruel, hostile and warring" (p. 16). They express their manliness in the terrorizing of whole classes of persons. Male weapons are the penis, the gun, the knife, the fist and the lynching tree. Pornography teaches men, according to Dworkin, that the expression and embodiment of male power is violence.

Men develop a strong loyalty to violence. Men must come to terms with violence, because it is a prime component to identity. . . . [In men's commitment to violence] men seek to adore themselves, or those distorted fragments of the self left over when the capacity to perceive the value of life has been paralyzed and maimed by the very adherence to violence that men articulate as life's central and emerging meaning. (pp. 51, 53)

Dworkin identifies other expressions of male power which find a voice in pornography. Male power implies ownership. Women's nature is subjugated to a man's because she "belongs to the man" (p. 19). In addition, men control and use money as a sexual power. Economic power over women becomes a means by which men can own women and then sexually control them. Finally, men define sex in terms of what they do to women because "the power of sex manifested in action, attitude, culture, attribute is the exclusive province of the male, his domain, inviolate and sacred" (pp. 22-23).

In Dworkin's most recent book (1987), patriarchal ideology about heterosexual intercourse is questioned. She comments on sexual life in Amerika [sic]:

In Amerika, there is the nearly universal conviction--or so it appears--that sex (fucking) is good and that liking it is right: morally right; a sign of human health; nearly a standard for citizenship. Even those who believe in original sin and have a theology of hellfire and damnation express the Amerikan creed, an optimism that glows in the dark; sex is good, healthy, wholesome, pleasant, fun; we like it, we enjoy it, we want it, we are cheerful about it; it is as simple as we are, the citizens of this strange country with no memory and no mind. (p.47)

Commenting upon the above description of sex in American life, Dworkin asserts that intercourse itself functions as a metaphor for men's domination over women. Sexual intercourse is "comprehended as a form of possession or an act of possession" (p. 63).

A man inhabits a woman, physically covering her and overwhelming her and at the same time penetrating her; and this physical relation to her--over her and inside her--is his possession of her. . . . His thrusting into her is taken to be her capitulation to him as a conqueror; it is a physical surrender of herself to him; he occupies and rules her, expresses his elemental dominance over her, by his possession of her in the fuck.

The act itself, without more, is the possession. . . . The normal fuck by a normal man is taken to be an act of invasion and ownership undertaken in a mode of predation: colonizing, forceful (manly) or nearly violent; the sexual act that by its nature makes her his. God made it so, or nature did, according to the faith of the explainer of events and values. (p. 63)

While essentially a private act of a man and a woman alone, in Dworkin's analysis the community

functions as shades at the bedside, cheering on the man in his gaining possession of the woman. Intimate and private, intercourse is the ideal community imperative for domination. Of this reasoning, Dworkin continues:

In other words, men possess women when men fuck women because both experience the man being male. This is the stunning logic of male supremacy. In this view, which is the predominant one, maleness is aggressive and violent; and so fucking, in which both the man and the woman experience maleness, essentially demands the disappearance of the woman as an individual; thus in being fucked, she is possessed: ceases to exist as a discrete individual: is taken over. (p. 64)

In such a model, the penis assumes mythic proportions. Sexual power itself resides in the penis. It is the penis which differentiates the power of maleness and the powerlessness of femaleness.

Dworkin believes men's strong loyalty is to violence fused with sexuality and that violent sexuality becomes a primary component to their identity. In her work, men's commitment to violence is a form of self-adoration (1981, p. 53). It is by men's commitment to violence that the penis becomes activated. In fact for the penis to be male, in this paradigm, it must incarnate male violence against women. The woman's only desired response is to submit and to obey. The message of pornography for women is that

woman is not born; she is made. In the making her humanity is destroyed. She becomes the symbol of

this, symbol of that . . . but she never becomes her self because it is forbidden to do so. . . . No sense of her own purpose can supercede, finally, the male's sense of her purpose: to be that thing that enables him to experience raw phallic power. In pornography, his sense of purpose is fully realized. . . . She is the thing she is supposed to be: the thing that makes him erect. . . . She is used until she knows only that she is a thing to be used. This knowledge is her authentic erotic sensibility; her erotic destiny. (Dworkin, 1981, p. 128)

In a male dominant world, a woman is meant to be controlled. It is her nature to need, expect and accept control. It is normal for this control to be accomplished with violence. Therefore, the message of pornography preaches that women need the threat of force or the actuality of violence for sexual fulfillment. Corollary to this message is a second one. That message is that the woman knows her need for control. But since it is also her nature to conceal and dissemble, she hides and denies her need. It is the truth of pornography that "She wants it. They all do" (p. 166). Pornography creates the woman's nature as whore, slut, soliciting, female, predatory bitch in heat, a brazen non-self, a thing. In her nature the woman always desires, begs, or demands to be used as the object-thing of male desire.

In the pornographic vision, according to Dworkin, all women wait for force and when once forced each

woman is pleased and fulfilled. All women are whores;  
all women are sexually available; it is their nature.

The destiny of the woman who does not want it-moralistic or inhibited with a low sex drive-is the familiar female destiny because underneath is the masochist who does want it. . . or would if she were not moralistic or inhibited-is precisely the same as the destiny of the harlot who provokes in order to be forced. The female is never entitled to not want sex. Force used against her when she refuses is always warranted because she is never entitled to not want sex. No authentic idea of bodily integrity is ever hers to claim or to have. Force does not violate her or victimize her because force is nature's way of giving her what she really wants. Force is nature's victory over the constraints of civilization. Force is intrinsic to male sexuality and force used against her does not victimize her; it actualizes her. (p. 198)

Not all feminists agree with Dworkin's analysis of pornographic representation. Nor do they agree that pornography is necessarily harmful to women. C. R. Stimpson, noted feminist educator, proclaims her membership in the Feminist Anti-Censorship Task Force (FACT). Joining with other members of FACT, she states she abhors "a struggle within feminism about pornography that has distracted our attention from the issues of 'real equality, real power--strengthened civil rights legislation, affirmative action to achieve economic parity, improved education, access to public office, better services for victims of violence and abuse'" (Stimpson, 1988, p. 192). She identifies sexual imagery as complex, "multiple, contradictory,

layered, and highly contextual" (p. 193). It is not a matter of assessing simple causality. Stimpson singles out Dworkin for her disdain. She describes Dworkin's rhetoric as shrewd, but implies Dworkin represents a narrow spectrum of women in her concerns about pornography. She does not believe pornographic representations of sexuality are, in and of themselves, dangerous to women (p. 193).

Kendrick (1987), in a direct attack upon Dworkin, says of her that she believes that an "entire system of inherited and inculcated values would somehow vanish, or at least become innocuous, if its rudest embodiment were made unavailable" (pp. 231-232). He goes on to identify two issues for social criticism of pornography: (1) Does pornography reinforce men in their pre-existing internal attitudes toward women and encourage men to enact them? or (2) Does pornography create images in men who did not already have them? While raising the questions, Kendrick does not utilize social science research for an answer. Kendrick's stance throughout his whole book is that the removal of pornography is not a solution to real life sexual violence, rather, its removal might send men's attitudes about women underground where they would then fester.

Kendrick believes that the feminist inspired phase of the pornography debate involves power rather than sex. In essence, feminist debate entails

the long-overdue recognition that what we have been arguing about the entire time is a matter of power, of access to the world around us, of control over our own bodies and our own minds. . . . a certain problematic of power has been unfolding; and now, at last, the naked truth of it seems to stand exposed. (p. 236)

However, Kendrick argues that a deeper level of analysis involves awareness that "Below the interminable jockeyings for power, fueling them, lurks the old fear that representations direct our lives in ways we cannot govern or even understand" (p. 236). He believes it is overly simplistic to argue that men's use of pornography is a component in male violence against women. For Kendrick, reality lies in the complexity of human behavior. Not even the most trivial human behavior is triggered by simplistic cause and effect. Human sexual behavior is complex and multifaceted. Therefore, for him, pornographic representations of sexual violence are not likely lead to actual violence by men in relationships with women.

S. Griffin's (1981) analysis of pornography critiques the thesis that pornography represents sexual liberation. In this thesis, the pornographer presages sexual liberation and becomes a champion of political liberty. Griffin writes:



One is used to thinking of pornography as part of the larger movement toward sexual liberation. In the idea of the pornographic image we imagine a revolution against silence. We imagine that eros will be set free in the mind first and then in the body by this revelation of a secret part of the human soul. And the pornographer comes to us . . . not only as libertine . . . but also as a champion of political liberty. For within our idea of freedom of speech we would include freedom of speech about the whole life of the body and even the darkest parts of the mind. (p. 1)

She denies that pornography is one way in which culture sets eros free. Rather, Griffin views pornography as the poetry of oppression. Instead of freeing eros, pornography participates in and celebrates its death. The pornographer, through his preoccupation with women's flesh, reveals his preoccupation with nature. And, according to the Griffin, it is nature which he hates. Hatred of nature and eros; hatred of flesh united with spirit; both are revealed in the pornographer's images and words.

As we explore the images from the pornographer's mind we will begin to decipher his iconography. We will see that the bodies of women in pornography, mastered, bound, silenced, beaten and even murdered, are symbols for natural feeling and the power of nature which the pornographic mind hates and fears. And above all we will come to see that the "woman" in pornography . . . is simply a lost part of the soul, that region of being the pornographic . . . mind would forget and destroy. (pp. 2-3)

Griffin claims that the geography of the pornographic mind reveals the dominant mind of American culture. Therefore, everyone participates in the

pornographic mind, "some as conquerors, others as victims" (p. 3). By means of philosophy, literature, religious doctrine, art, film, advertisements and even the commonest set of gestures Western cultures reveal a commitment to the separation of flesh from spirit. Pornographic fusion of sexuality with violence reflects culture's revenge against nature (p. 3).

Griffin comments upon the common wisdom that the pornographer bravely represents the free life of the imagination against the repression of the church. Seeing the church fathers as those who function as judges and inquisitors, the pornographer rebels against what he perceives as the church's rigid morality. "Certainly the pornographer is obsessed with the idea of transgression" (p. 15). However, "when we look at the history of pornography and the pornographer's obsession with transgressing the morality of the church, we begin to understand that pornography, and the pornographic idea of sin, could not exist without the great cathedrals" (p. 17).

The pornographer utilizes the themes of the church as he deals with women's flesh. It is the nature of rebellion and transgression to imitate that which they rebel against. Drawing upon the church's treatment of women during the Inquisition in which women were tortured, Griffin concludes that "the metaphysics of

Christianity and the metaphysics of pornography are the same" (p. 14). The pornographer "chose the same object for his rage as had the church fathers through centuries of tradition" (p. 19).

Underlying the pornographer's rebellion against culture lies the religious structure of the Christian Church. For Griffin, "pornography, and the pornographic idea of sin, could not exist without the great cathedrals" (p. 16). However, in the pornographic act of rebellion, the pornographer forgets that his enemy, the church, is internalized in his psyche.

So the veil is drawn over the real life of pornography. What advertises itself as nakedness is shrouded. What is called frankness is denial. What is called passion is death of feeling. What is called desire is degradation. . . . And what is called a transgression against the church fathers is finally loyalty. Just as St. Jerome, in his attempt to flee from a woman's body, found images of dancing girls intruding on his vision even when he lived alone in the desert of Chaces, so too, perdition, sin and hell haunt the pornographer even in his most extreme acts of rebellion.  
(p. 16)

Within patriarchal cultures, woman's self is erased from view and her body becomes a screen for men's projections of human nature. That which is defined as earthbound, finite, and feminine is hated and denied. Physical materiality, present in the woman's sexuality and birth-giving reminds the pornographer, just as it did early church patriarchs,

of that which is shameful. "So the female body, like the whore of Babylon in church iconography, . . . lures the pornographer and incites his rage" (p. 20). Body and soul are split away from one another. A gulf exists between carnal love and spiritual love.

Pornographers, as did the early Church fathers, elaborate upon the evils of female flesh. Women's flesh becomes an object to be used. The male principle is celebrated while the female one is denied. In pornography, the woman's reason for life itself is to seduce and please the man, who uses and then reviles her flesh. The man is master; the woman is slave. About the woman's own sexual desire, we learn nothing. Griffin continues:

The pornographic mind would separate culture from nature. It would desacralize matter. It would punish matter with image. Pornography's revenge against nature is precisely to deprive matter of spirit. And so in one act, pornography humiliates woman's body by reducing her soul. And in another act by terrifying her, pornography pits a woman's physical survival against the needs of her soul, and, drives her soul thus to destruction. (p. 49)

It is in nature's silence, in the silence of spirit and eros that pornography's terror is realized. Pornography, like patriarchal Christianity, inculcates the silencing of women. Rather than expressing a liberating power, pornography conserves that which is, the image of woman as whore. The enforced splitting of body and soul forces the woman to become other than

that which she, by her own nature, is. The cultural message of pornography, just like the message of patriarchal Christianity, is that a woman's flesh is evil and that she needs control and punishment. In the link between pornography and rape, representation becomes enactment.

Pornography's message is one of death, not life; it involves the death of spirit, of self, and of eros. Its central myth is that of male primacy and male domination. A feature of that mythic understanding is that woman's flesh is evil and that woman's self needs conquering and subjugating. In pornography, as in rape, woman acts as a function: she is something to be entered and used for men's purposes (Metzger, 1976, p. 406).

J. Raymond (1986), in a discussion of pornography by and about women for women discusses lesbian sadomasochistic pornography as a form of assimilation to the male world, writes:

So-called lesbian sadomasochists would . . . say that only certain kinds of sex "prove one's mettle," and--to pun on the obsolete meaning of this word--one's sexual "mettle" is proven by mettel (read "metal" as in collars, chains, spikes and other such "exotic" paraphernalia). They assert this under the guise of "freeing women from their traditional role of 'affectionate sexuality' which," they claim, "lacks vigor and is indeed 'wimpy.'" So-called lesbian sadomasochism confines sexuality to highly charged sex act, substituting forceful and often violent sex performances for ardor and intense passion. (p. 167)

Raymond believes that "The sadomasochistic mentality and movement assimilate women into a sexual liberation that is none other than the unrestrained expression of male-defined behavior, where sexual liberation is tantamount to doing whatever one 'feels' like doing" (p. 168). Identifying the tyranny of feelings, Raymond identifies lesbian sadomasochism as a reactionary mentality in which women replicate men's behavior towards women.

In addition, pornographic representations of lesbian sadomasochism "reduces women to object-object interaction" (p. 169). Often published by men for women, this form of pornography puts women "back in place as sexual objects. This time women objectify each other" (p. 169).

At the 1988 Michigan Womyns' Music Festival, a largely--but not totally--lesbian enclave of 6000-8000 women, feminist women were implicitly encouraged to be tolerant of lesbian violence. A "differently pleasured" shop was on the premises selling "S and M" items. Some women during the encampment openly joked about "Bush Garden" and the women there who were sexually violent with their partners. Nipple rings were worn freely and some women wore leather without embarrassment. During informal discussions, questions about why women's violence towards other women was more

acceptable than men's violence towards women raised much anger among pro s and m women. Throughout heated discussions, lesbian women accused heterosexual women (those who raised these questions) of compulsive, judgmental, and oppressive heterosexuality.

Raymond discusses the demand for feminist tolerance of female initiated violence as a form of infection in the women's movement. As dogma, "tolerance asserts that there should be no value judgments made about anything" (1986, p. 169). Raymond asserts that when women do not use their capacity for moral judgment, a certain kind of tyranny results. "It is the tyranny of tolerance that fosters a loss of feminist will--the will to shape history in a value-defined way" (p. 169). From this form of tyranny, paralysis results. "For example, many women vaguely 'feel' that so-called lesbian sadomasochism is wrong but hold back from translating that 'feeling' into an articulate position and opposing action. No one, they say, has the right to judge the behavior of others or enforce one's own values" (p. 170).

Raymond urges women to recognize that the "tyranny of tolerance . . . allows oppressive values to surface without being rebutted" (p. 171). When this happens feminism is sapped of its moral passion and purpose. The women's movement, then, becomes divested of its

radicalism (p. 171). Raymond's reading of sadomasochistic pornography oriented towards women echoes my own sense of the matter.

Playgirl, for example, is supposedly oriented toward young women who are heterosexual. The naked male body is objectified in much the same manner as Playboy objectifies female bodies. Playgirl has a section each month in which sexual fantasies, purported to be written by its women readers, are published. Clearly designed to be masturbatory fantasies, some of these stories involve male violence towards women. Others describe women in simultaneous, multiple sexual relationships in which, for example, one man's penis fills her mouth while another's fills her vagina. Troubled by the presence of so much fantasied violence and male domination over women in a magazine designed for women, I looked to see if women were publishing Playgirl. The current publisher is a man.

Several years ago I asked a magazine distributor about the purchasers of Playgirl. He said he thought more homosexual men than heterosexual women bought the magazine. In his opinion the magazine's male nudity, even in its supposedly heterosexual context, was oriented towards men. A young woman who introjected the magazine sexual fantasies into her own masturbatory practices was, therefore, in Raymond's terminology,



"assimilating to the male dominant world on its terms" (p. 164). Under the pronounced guise of sexual liberation, Playgirl's message continues pornography's preoccupation with sexual violence. In a certain sense Playgirl announces with pride that women deserve to view their own sexuality as men have historically viewed it. From this perspective sexual liberation involves gaining freedom by exploiting and trivializing women's fears of sexual violence and domination.

#### Pornography and Rape

Social science research into the effects of pornography on actual violence against women attempts to discern whether sexually explicit material has a lasting impact upon its viewers. Is it cathartic? Does it drain off dangerous male energies? Or, does pornography potentiate men's proclivity toward sexual violence? Does it exacerbate already existing impulses to do violence? Discussing current research about sexual aggression and pornography, N. Malamuth (Malamuth and Donnerstein, 1984) writes, "The theoretical perspective . . . is, in general, that the stimuli's degree of sexual explicitness per se does not necessarily determine whether prosocial or antisocial effects occur" (p. xvi). Rather, the value messages

contained within pornography and communicated by it appear to be the essential underlying dynamic. These messages are exemplified as potentially diverse ones such as "violence has positive consequences; male dominance over women is natural; sexuality involves mutual respect" (p. xvi).

Empirical research has demonstrated that sexually explicit materials (literature, visual imagery, and recordings) yield physical arousal. Subjects' self-reports as well as empirically monitored assessments (penile erection measurements, vaginal secretion measurements and genital temperatures) of arousal document this in a variety of studies (Byrne & Kelley, 1984, p. 4). The permissive view of such arousal is that it is natural, good, liberating and healthy. In addition, a catharsis principle is evoked. Fantasy enactment can replace actual enactment. If pornography diverts violence into fantasy rather than triggering violence, pornography has a protective role within society. This is essentially the view of the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography (1970).

In the years immediately following the Commission's report, additional studies about the effect of pornography on sexual behavior appeared to indicate that erotica-pornography had limited effects

on people. The Commission's conclusions about the harmlessness of pornography appeared to be substantiated (Byrne & Kelley, pp. 5-6).

However, by the mid-1970s, feminist critiques of pornography began to impact pornography research. Researchers asked in an empirical fashion that which feminist authors hypothesized: Does pornography function as the educational methodology for rape? By the middle of the 1980s, empirical research began to indicate significant and lasting responses to some forms of erotica-pornography. The first changes brought about by repeated exposure are those in emotions, fantasies and beliefs (p. 7).

When pornographic materials integrate unequal power relationships, coercive imagery, violence and rape myths with sexual imagery, subject responses can result in an "increase in aggressive-sexual fantasies, aggressive behavior, acceptance of anti-female attitudes, and, specifically in male aggression against females" (p. 9). In other words, when a film, for example, combines explicit sexual imagery with a coercive, violent context, there is an increased possibility of enacted sexual violence against women for some of its male viewers. Among some subjects "sexual arousal is greatest in response to images of

nonconsensual sex and even in response to nonsexual violent depictions" (p. 9). In other words, it is the violence that arouses.

In N. Malamuth's (1984) studies of men most "likely to rape" he considered three factors: generalized cultural factors that affect many or most members of society, the personality make-up of individuals, and situational factors that act as triggers for behavior. For Malamuth, communication media is a cultural force. He studies the impact of sexually explicit media representations upon college students. In a variety of studies with college age men, an average of approximately 35% indicated some likelihood to rape a woman if they knew they would not get caught (p. 22). Men with a high likelihood to rape can be differentiated from those with a low or nonexistent likelihood to rape. Men with a high likelihood to rape are more likely to demonstrate: (1) belief in rape myths and callous attitudes about rape; (2) high levels of sexual arousal to rape depictions; (3) hostility towards women; (4) sex-role stereotyping; (5) cognitive misperceptions of women's behavior; (6) idiosyncratic personality factors; and (7) power as a motive for sexuality (pp. 24-26).

Theoretically the fusion of sex and aggression is seen by Malamuth as resulting from conditioning

processes whereby aggressive acts become associated with sexual arousal. The arousal itself becomes a "powerful unconditioned stimulus and reinforcer" (p. 31). In addition, the power of imitation and modeling is also activated. If, in media linkages of sexuality and violence, the woman is also presented as liking sexual violence, the portrayal of her behavior appears to imply to observers that a woman will eventually respond favorably to male sexual assault.

E. Donnerstein (1984), in a summary of multiple studies about the impact of pornography upon men's acts of sexual violence reports:

Nonaggressive [pornographic] material only affect aggression when inhibitions to aggress are quite low, or with long-term and massive exposure. With single exposure and normal aggressing conditions, there is little evidence that nonviolent pornography has any negative effects. . . . it is the aggressive content of pornography that is the main contributor to violence against women. In fact, fact when we remove the sexual content from such films and just leave the aggressive aspect, we find a similar pattern of aggression and asocial attitudes. . . . When materials were chosen to reflect consenting, equal power (or nonpower), or truly erotic content, then no negative effects were observed. (pp. 78-80)

D. Zillmann and J. Bryant (1984) explain the aggression-enhancing effect of arousing erotica as excitation (or arousal) transfer. Sexual arousal, like other forms of arousal, carries a nonspecific sympathetic nervous system component. With insufficient resolution, residual excitation from

sexual arousal contributes to an intensification of anger and hostility responses. Massive, repeated exposure to erotica-pornography has a habituating effect. More intense stimulation is needed to maintain levels of sexual arousal. Findings from their research indicate that the effects of habituation are "non-transitory and potentially long lasting"

(p. 131). Specifically questioning the impact of habituation upon rape perceptions, the authors report that "massive exposure to pornography fosters a general trivialization of rape," in which the victim's suffering during rape is undermined" (p. 135). In addition, massive exposure increased sex callousness in a substantial manner and decreased men's support for women's liberation.

It can only be speculated that this effect results from the characteristic portrayal of women in pornography as socially nondiscriminating, as hysterically euphoric in response to just about any sexual or pseudosexual stimulation, and as eager to accommodate seemingly any and every sexual request. (p. 135)

The authors conclude that " massive exposure to pornography appears to contribute to beliefs about sexual desire and sexual conduct that are not conducive to respect for the opposite (or the same) sex" (p. 135).

During the 1970s and 1980s pornography has continued its shift towards more violence and towards

more explicit violence. P. E. Dietz and B. Evans (1982) classified 1760 heterosexual pornographic magazine covers from 1970 to 1981. Bondage and domination imagery "increased markedly" and by 1981 constituted 17.2 percent of the covers. Malamuth reports that a study by D. G. Smith found that in one third of hard-core paperbacks published between 1968 and 1974 force was used by men to force women into unwanted sexual acts (Malamuth, 1984, p. 30).

While social scientists are unwilling to state unequivocally that pornography leads to rape, partially because their studies do not, nor can they, answer this specific question, they do raise troubling questions about the power of sexual representation in eliciting behavior. Whether or not representations of sexual violence lead to actual violence, it appears increasingly clear that they do not lead to respect and caring mutuality. Rather it appears they reinforce old ideas about the desirability of feminine submission and obedience as well as an underlying image of women who either deserve or seek punishment.

## Note

## Chapter 6

\*J. G. Raymond (1986) describes women's bonding inside Nazi concentration camps where torture of women was sexualized (pp. 39-41).



## Chapter 7

### Classical Psychoanalysis and Woman's Consciousness

Secrecy is rooted in shaming  
the victim and discrediting her story.

Judith Herman  
Sexual Violence

#### Introduction

Classical psychoanalysis, beginning in the nineteenth century with S. Freud, claims that individuals are formed "through their sexuality" (Mitchell, 1974, p. 20). By means of the libido, a sexual life force, the person's sexuality and the structure of her consciousness are inextricably intertwined. While both structures, sexuality and consciousness, are co-existent in a woman's life, they are not co-equivalent. It is partially through her sexuality that the woman comes to consciousness. The libidinous life force according to Freud (1933[1932]), is instinctual and inborn. He writes, "The first object of our study was only the sexual instincts, whose energy we named 'libido'. . . . We can picture it as a certain quota of energy which presses in a certain direction" (p. 96). In Freud's thought, the sexual

instinct and its driving energy, the libido, precedes formation of the structures of consciousness. The interaction of libidinous energy with the infant's external world shapes the human structures of consciousness. The id with its instinctual longings; the ego with its direct contact with the environment; and the superego with its judgement functions: each are directly related to the initial primacy of the instinctual libido in the structures of human consciousness (Freud, 1923).

According to Freud, a woman's developmental journey from infancy to aging is deeply shaped by the young girl child's discovery that she does not have a penis. She makes the assumption that she has been castrated. Central to Freud's theory of female sexuality is the phallus. The phallus is not simply the biological penis, it is also a mythic structure involved in the primary structuring of consciousness within men and women. The phallus is that which creates the central distinction between the two genders. By its absence in the girl and its presence in the male, the penis as phallus assumes a driving function in all human development.

The libido itself is masculine in character because it is the active force in human life (Donovan, 1985, p. 93). Maleness, in Freud's thought, is the

assumed prototype for humanity. Femaleness is a derivative status.<sup>1</sup> Initially, the little girl is psychosexually similar to the little boy. In addition, her autoeroticism is essentially the same as the boy's. The woman's developmental journey is quintessentially the transformation from being a little boy into being a woman. She does this by a circuitous process of growing up. Thus, masculine libido, the mythic phallus, and the male penis are presumed to be the primary shaping forces in human sexuality as well as in human consciousness itself.

### Oedipus Revisited

Both the boy and girl child desire sexual possession of the mother and understand that to gain possession one must have a penis which the mother desires. Once the girl child realizes the absence of a penis, a castration complex emerges in which she becomes psychologically committed to perpetual desire for the phallic penis (Mitchell, 1974, p. 7; 1982, p. 7). Or, in Mitchell's own words, "The phallus with its missing status in her biological nature comes to represent the missing object of her desire, of her nature" (1982, p. 24). The little girl now seeks ownership of the father's penis, only to discover her

mother's prior claim. She fears the mother's punishment for her wishes towards the father. The father denies a lover relationship with the little girl by his prohibition of genital intercourse with her. "For Freud, the absence of the penis in women is significant only in that it makes meaningful the father's prohibition on 'incestuous desires'" (1982, p. 17). Eventually the little girl, now a woman, makes a transfer to another man who does become her lover and provides her with the phallic penis which she seeks.<sup>2</sup> She may also have a male child, which even more satisfyingly provides her with a penis (1974, pp. 101-104).

When the little girl child discovers her clitoris, she perceives that it is a deficient genital organ in comparison with the male's magnificent visually accessible organ. With the dawning of this awareness, she develops a deep sense of personal inferiority.

Psychologically she must now accept her castration and her genital inferiority and move towards becoming a woman and not a man. Since her castration has already happened she does not need to fear castration as a

future event. With the absence of this fear as a motivating force in her ongoing development, she develops a less powerful super-ego.

Once she resolves her primordial, mythic castration feelings; once she is denied the opportunity to claim the father's penis as her own; and once she again turns toward the mother as the primary object of identification; the little girl child firmly establishes her journey toward femininity and womanhood (Donovan, pp. 94-95).

#### The Oedipal Shaping of Consciousness

The marks of womanhood in psychoanalytic theory, are fourfold: feminine masochism; feminine passivity; feminine vanity, jealousy and a limited sense of justice; and vaginal orgasm (Mitchell, 1974, pp. 113-119). Feminine masochism has its earliest roots in the wish to be punished by the father. In a fantasy reported to Freud by many analysands, the patients report, "A child is being beaten" (Freud, 1919). Freud interprets this fantasy as one of incestuous love:

The phantasy of the period of incestuous love had said: "He [my father] loves only me, and not the other child, for he is beating it. The sense of guilt can discover no punishment more severe than the reversal of this triumph: "no, he does not

love you, for he is beating you." In this way the phantasy of being beaten by her father, is a direct expression of the girls sense of guilt, to which her love for her father has now succumbed. The phantasy, therefore, has become masochistic. (p. 190)

Fantasies of being beaten<sup>3</sup>, accompanied by childhood masturbation, yield an erotic climax. Erotogenic masochism, arising out of these early childish acts of masturbation, continues throughout her life. Erotogenic masochism is the foundational mechanism for the woman's later more generalized feminine masochism.

Feminine passivity has its roots in the Oedipal strivings of the little girl. (In addition, there is a morphological model in the relationship of the female ovum and the male sperm.)<sup>4</sup> She gives up her aggressiveness and activity in order to be loved.<sup>5</sup> Childish narcissism gives birth to vanity.<sup>6</sup> The girl, now psychologically wounded by the inadequacy of her clitoris, turns her whole body into something which is to be adored and admired. Her envy of the male penis turns into jealousy. Her additional psychic processes of identification in her Oedipal development as she turns from mother to father and then turns once again to mother create a delay in the emergence of her super-ego. This late emergence results in an inferior sense

of justice. This, in turn, leads to the conclusion that while men's function in society is to reproduce society, a woman's function is to reproduce herself.

Finally, femininity develops as the girl learns how to be attractive to men. In her erotic life as a woman, the woman transfers clitoral attachment to vaginal attachment. Vaginal orgasms indicate that this difficult transfer has been made successfully.<sup>7</sup>

While Freud initially believed in the facticity of stories about women's early encounters with sexual violence as they were told to him by his female analysands, he quickly shifted from belief in these stories as actual stories to an interpretive or hermeneutical stance of suspicion. The stories became interpreted as psychic fantasy and wish-fulfillment. Although Freud gave up his belief in a paternal or adult male initiated event of actual seduction for girls, he retained belief in their castration fantasies. His hermeneutical suspicion towards his female client's stories led him to discount their accounts of incest. This understanding of feminine stories or narratives enabled him to re-construe the accounts of sexual violence in childhood and adolescence as concealed wishes within feminine

consciousness. These concealed wishes were ones in which the girl or woman desired forbidden incestuous contacts with the father.

Psychiatrist J. Herman (1984) writes about this decision of Freud which in effect silenced the stories of his women clients.

Denial [of incest] within the medical and mental health professions goes back to Freud, who in his early work, saw many upper-middle class Viennese women complaining of hysteria. What they were hysterical about, they revealed, were sexual assaults by men they knew and trusted-frequently their fathers. Freud initially believed his informants, took them seriously, and in an 1896 essay called, *The Aetiology of Hysteria*, proposed the seduction theory, which postulated that at the basis of every case of hysteria was a childhood assault. Within a year he retracted that theory-not because he found new evidence from patients-but because he could not believe there were so many incest cases. (p. 3)

According to Herman's analysis, when Freud shifted the focus from the reality of sexual assaults to the fantasy life of the victim, he "drew a veil of secrecy over incest and child sexual assault" (p. 3).

### Erik Erikson

In North America Erikson (1950, 1968, 1975 and Evans, 1967) established himself as an authority on human growth and development. He followed much of Freud's theory about a girl's developmental journey to womanhood. While altering the Freudian notion that



anatomy is most important in determining destiny in human development in boys, Erikson appears to believe that biology remains primarily responsible for the psycho-sexual developmental destiny of girls. For Erikson, a young girl's psycho-sexual development is based upon the prior fact of her biological nature. Specifically, Erikson deals with the girl's "inner space" (1968, 1975). Only when women experience sexual intercourse do they mature into adulthood. Until a woman establishes a mate relationship, experiences coitus and gives birth to a child, she exists in a status of waiting for completion. Her identity, unlike her male counterpart's, is on hold (Erikson, 1968, pp. 282-83; 1975, pp. 239-40).

Erikson's earliest written comments about girls and their developmental processes do not change significantly in his entire corpus of works. In a section of his 1950 book, Childhood and Society, he deals with the anxieties of small children. The boy child fears castration, "being deprived of an intrusive weapon" (p. 410). The girl child, however, fears "being left empty . . . and being left" (p. 410).

According to Erikson, women fearing abandonment do not question men's pursuits of competition, conquest and war. They "pretend that they really believe in

. . . men's magnificent equipment" (p. 411). It is in this context that Erikson writes:

Somewhere, of course, the little girl learns to hate him so smugly has what it takes-and can take it with him. By way of a "projection" too complicated for a brief account, the little girl's hate intensifies her fear of being raped [emphasis his], leading to an anxiety easily fused with the various pregenital fears of being eaten into, being robbed and being emptied. (p. 411)

The little girl in Erikson's work also has noticed that she is missing a penis. In addition, however, she has noticed that the little boy has more privileges than she has. She attributes the little boy's privileges to his penis. When questioned specifically about penis envy in little girls, he replied, "So you are right: women could not help harboring that inner rage which comes from having to identify with your exploiter's negative images of you" (Evans, 1967, pp. 44-45).

In one of his studies in a Berkeley school, children aged 12 and 13 played with blocks. Approximately two-thirds of the girls arranged the blocks into an enclosed space into which animal and male figurines entered. Erikson represents that interior space as relatively peaceful for most of the girls. However, for some the representation was of intrusion by dangerous animals or dangerous men (Erikson, 1968, pp. 268-271; 1975, pp. 231-233). His

interpretation of the interior spaces and their intruders is that of a visual metaphor for genital intercourse. As Erikson interprets the girls' reaction to the creation of enclosing space and the intrusions, he writes that "the majority of these intrusions have an element of humor and pleasurable excitement" (p. 271). In this, his first major work on girls' development, he advances his argument that a woman's identity forms via her biological potential for heterosexual coitus. He avoids Freud's use of passivity terminology and substitutes his preferred language of waiting and fulfillment.<sup>8</sup>

Erikson's observations with these pre-adolescent and adolescent girls raise tantalizing questions about sexual violence. Did he, like Freud, overlook the obvious? Was this research play-activity with children revelatory of the presence of actual sexual violence in their life histories? Did the visual story contained by the arrangements of blocks tell another story than the developmental one which Erikson created from their efforts? Were these girl children telling a story of sexual violence? It is, of course, impossible to know.

Therese Benedek, Marie Bonaparte and Helene Deutsch

Several of the early women analysts did not deviate in significant ways from orthodox Freudian views of feminine development. T. Benedek (1961) describes women's sexuality in terms of a diffuse, narcissistic libido which emerges later than does a boy's. Because the girl's genitals are not in view, she initially remains ignorant about their presence. Once she learns a bit about the differences of boys and girls, she preoccupies herself with mirrors, seeking to answer her curiosity about her body. Penis envy directed towards her father or other boys mobilizes the girl's heterosexual tendency to incorporate the penis and to possess it. Maturational processes in normal women direct sexual energy towards men. These, in turn, threaten girls' attachments to their mothers. Because of her ambivalence, she remains oedipally fixated for a longer period than does the boy. The resultant consequence is that her superego remains less vigorous.

Benedek likewise accepts Freud's beliefs about clitoral inferiority. When the girl discovers her inferior clitoris, she is biologically impelled towards a permanent sense of personal inferiority. Her biological inferiority and the resultant sense of

psychological inferiority underlie penis envy in girls and women (pp. 50-51). The woman's personality, then, is characterized by a "deep passivity and specific tendency toward introversion" (p. 73). "On this basis we assume that the emotional manifestations of the specific passive-receptive and narcissistic retentive tendencies represent the psychodynamic correlates of the biological need for motherhood" (p. 73).

For M. Bonaparte (1953) each little girl undergoes shock when she discovers the genital differences between boys and girls. To become a mature woman, the girl must accept her loss. Women adapt to this loss in three primary ways: some substitute the desire for a penis with a desire for a child; some abandon all competition with men; finally some, the clitoridals, deny gender differences. Feminine masochism arises when the girl discovers the minuteness of her clitoris and engages in fantasies of castration and ravishment at the hands of her father (p. 78). Masturbatory activities united with masochistic fantasies tie the woman more securely to her infantile libidinal urges (p. 81). The clitoris remains cathected to the father as two connected fantasies possess her consciousness: the father's sexual assault on her anal zone from behind and his assault on her clitoris in front.

Initially, in fantasy, the girl imagines someone else being beaten; then she imagines herself being beaten; finally, she connects fantasies of beating with masturbation. Bonaparte speculates that it is her clitoris that the girl wants to have beaten by the father (p. 85). Beating precedes penetration. "One knocks at a door before entering. One shakes, if necessary, the lock or key" (p. 84). The father's "rod" can then enter the vagina, the woman's "hollow penis." The woman, in intercourse, is subjected to a type of beating, receiving the man's blows and loving his violence (p. 85). Women who are averse to men's brutal games in intercourse must be suspected of excessive bi-sexuality or homosexuality and are most likely clitoridals (p. 86).

Thus, Bonaparte agrees with Freud. The adult woman, in her very nature, is essentially passive, masochistic and receptive. It is her nature to love violence directed against her in coitus.

H. Deutsch (1944) also considers the girl child's masochistic fantasies. These fantasies begin very early in childhood and continue throughout the adult woman's life.

The fantasy life of girls reveals an unmistakably masochistic content. Girlish fantasies relating to rape often remain unconscious but evince their content in dreams, sometimes in symptoms, and often accompany masturbatory actions. In dreams

the rape is symbolic; . . . . they [the dreams] are connected with fear, not with pleasure, and thus differ from the boy's puberty dreams. (p. 261)

Not only is the girl child absorbed with fearful, masochistic night dreams; she is also absorbed by her deliberately designed daytime fantasies as well. In these erotic fantasies she is overpowered by blows and humiliation only secondarily to be overcome by tender, loving, amorous acts. She wishes, narcissistically, to suffer for her lover. These fantasies of rape, "have such irresistible versimilitude that even the most experienced judges are misled in trials of innocent men accused of rape by hysterical women" (p. 262).

According to these authors, a woman's developmental journey is determined by that which she does not have; a phallic penis. Because of its absence in her biological make-up, the woman is predisposed toward a never-ending search for the penis which she can possess and which will then possess her.

### Psychoanalytic Theory and Rape

Psychoanalysis, with its theory of unconscious motivations for behavior, has evolved into a system of therapy which is oriented towards the construction of a more mature, realistic ego and flexible personality

structure (Fromm-Reichman, 1950). Analytic techniques of dream analysis and free association assist that which was unconscious to become conscious (Freud, 1924a). Slips of the tongue and humor are also recognized as important data. In addition, analysts understand that recall and catharsis are not sufficient for personality growth. Rather, reliving of primal conflicts within the context of psychoanalytic transference is essential. Within a therapeutic transference relationship, the client can learn to recognize repressed wishes and intrapsychic conflicts. With successful analysis of transference issues within therapy clients learn new ways of handling these formerly repressed conflicts. By means of such reconditioning (Alexander and Ross, 1962, p. 29) clients relive their primary, usually Oedipal in origin, conflicts.

Because of their commitment to unconscious processes as determinative elements of human behavior, psychoanalysts have developed interpretive schemas in which the therapist maintains an aware suspiciousness towards overt content. Priority tends to be placed upon the unconscious, covert meaning or meanings. By an elaborate system of clinical hermeneutics, a hidden meaning assumes much more valence than does a manifest one. Because of the strength of these pre-existing



assumptions, a woman who tells a story about sexual violence in her life history needs to struggle to have her story believed. Because her story is infrequently validated within the clinical setting, it loses its power. As she narrates her experiences, the therapist interprets them back to her. What she reports as fear is reinterpreted as forbidden and repressed desire. What she reports as violent is reinterpreted as introjected fantasy and externalized projection of her own desire.

One of the typical mid-century articles about rape in psychoanalytic literature illustrates the brief summary above. M. Factor (1954) presented a case study about one of his women clients whose psychoanalytic treatment was interrupted by an event of attempted rape. The woman was twenty-eight years old. She lived with her Catholic parents and, in Factor's perception, was overprotected by her father. After the assault she reported a dream for interpretation.

I saw R (the culprit) in court. He turned around to me as I was sitting behind him. The judge said, "Do you plead guilty or not guilty?" and R turned to me and said, "Not guilty," as if to say, "Don't think you are getting away with it."

His expression, she said, meant, "Go ahead now-try to prove it. I'll fix you. You are not going to get away with this." I felt sick at my stomach. I had that sick feeling because I felt he'd be freed and might do something, or kill me.  
(p. 243)

Factor's interpretation of this dream demonstrates that his underlying concern was to identify unconscious motivation. What appears on the surface of the woman's dream narration (felt bad, felt sick, felt he might be freed, felt he might kill me), is reinterpreted as a subterfuge of the unconscious. He interprets the woman's overt fear of recurrent violence at the hands of her assailant as erotic transference towards the therapist.

The dream is thinly disguised and clearly expresses her feeling of guilt because of her unconscious complicity. The direct association contains the wish that her assailant be freed to repeat the attempt successfully (do something to kill me). Since her erotic transference was particularly strong before the attempt, it could be assumed that her analyst, father, and rapist were condensed. The dream indicates her guilt because the man is to be punished when she feels herself the guilty one. (p. 244)

Classical psychoanalytic understandings of women have tended to treat sexual violence in the lives of girls and women as a tributary of the river of women's sexuality. It is a secondary concern. Of more importance is the analytic perception of woman's sexual nature. The theory of female masochism and moral inferiority created a climate for clinical relationships in which women were seen as seeking, colluding in, or consenting to their own violation. Inasmuch as analysts believed that women sought suffering in their sexual relationships with men, it

was easy for clinicians to enquire about ways in which the woman precipitated her own victimization. These interpretations implied that the woman became her own violator. The man, in the sexually violent situation, was simply responding to her wishes. Because the man was responding to her initiating desires, he could not be held responsible for her suffering. Rather, her suffering initiated in her feminine masochism and its enactment in gender relationships.

Women in psychoanalytic literature are clearly the second born of creation. Without a penis, they are viewed as the derivative member of the species. Sexuality differences at birth implicitly become a discussion of nature and creation. Women's lack of the penis taints her psychological development. As a consequence she possesses an inferior capacity for moral judgment. In addition, her personality expresses itself in passivity, narcissism, and masochism. She is vain and desires to be conquered. Throughout her lifetime she longs for a penis and maturity is reached only after she accepts that of a spouse or a male baby as her own. Identity is finalized in marriage and coitus.

P. Caplan (1985) writes, "When a theory causes serious harm, it is time to ask, 'Are there any other, reasonable ways to explain the behavior in question?'"

(p. 2). For Caplan, the ideology of women's masochism poisons every aspect of life for women. Comparing the psychoanalytic concept of female masochism to Christian belief in original sin, both assume mythic proportions for Caplan. Both limit the woman's ability to define her own capacities, her choices and her understandings of relatedness to others. She writes:

A misogynist society has created a myriad of situations that make women unhappy. And then that same society uses the myth of women's masochism to blame the women themselves for their misery. . . . The myth serves two purposes: It leads both women and men to believe that women are deeply, inevitably pathological . . . and it is a powerful block against social action that could help women. (pp. 9-10)

Thus women are placed, according to Caplan, in a Catch-22 situation. Expected to serve the needs of others and prohibited from blaming external situations for their unhappiness and suffering, women are then labeled as masochistic when they begin to name the actual realities of frustration and pain in their lives.

### Conclusions

E. Janeway (1981) discusses the potential responses of those who are weak, who are oppressed and who are victimized. She writes for those who have experienced patriarchal dismembering of their lives so

that they can begin to re-member and re-order these very lives. The powers of the weak to change their lives exist in multiple levels of reality. Initially there is great power to be found in disbelief (pp. 157-167). By disbelief, Janeway means the withdrawal of consent by the powerless towards the powerful. Disbelief challenges the codes and accepted practices of an oppressing society. She comments that challenging the codes is equivalent to challenging the creeds and core of the society. The essential first act of disbelief is to refuse to "accept the definition of oneself that is put forward by the powerful" (p. 167).

Another power of the weak is that of coming together (pp. 168-185). Once mistrust and disbelief have freed the individual to question that which was previously believed and accepted, she needs to share these doubts and to gain validation that she is not crazy. Janeway states, "For women, the frightening experience of doubting society's directives and then doubting one's rights to doubt them is still very recent" (p. 168). It still remains easier for women to distrust their own reasonable doubts than to distrust the external realities which encircle them. Sharing one's own weakness is one of the pathways to strength. Disbelief shared with others can become a protective

shield as they collectively turn their backs on the powerful and refuse to participate in that which enslaves them. "Disguised disobedience" is one way in which a community of the weak refuse to cooperate with the powerful. Janeway adds that when there is bonding around issues where consent has previously been withdrawn, the weak must eventually question that which the previously accepted unquestioningly: the perceived self-image of weakness and incapacity (p. 174).

In situations of enforced tyranny, the weak's psychological response too frequently is one of immobilization. Terror exploits human fear in which prudence asks how much freedom would cost. If, however, in the face of enforced oppression, the weak hold on to their distrust, they can preserve their inner self and the capacity to judge the external world more appropriately for their own interests of long-term survival and integrity (pp. 205-206). Accepting the world of enacted injustice posits little hope for escape from tyranny and terror. Holding on to learned helplessness the weak become increasingly vulnerable to oppression because they lose belief in their ability to protect themselves in any way. According to Janeway, it is not a lack of courage which self-betrays the weak, it is the lack of clarity about the need for mistrust and validation.

Basic to survival, even in situations of surprise, pain or shame, is the refusal to image the self as subhuman. Even if all she can do is to observe and silently dissent, that will help her to survive.

"Dissent, the first power of the weak can preserve the mind though not the body; but an alert mind, able to judge for itself by its own stubbornly maintained precepts, stands a better chance of saving the body it inhabits than does a subservient robot" (p. 215). At issue, here for Janeway, is the possibility that the damned will be able to change the rules of hell (p. 216).

M. Daly (1984) urges women to move away from necrophilic structures of patriarchy which entrap and encircle them. Via "righteous rage and freed fury" they begin to express their personal integrity and transformation (pp. 257-259). For Daly, a woman's spiritual task is to unmask that which dismembers her so that she might re-member her life. That unmasking is of both external realities and internal ones as well. This "Breaking Out" of male ordered systems is not a tidy matter, but rather is a tidal wave of change in which the woman confronts demons. "Refusal to conform . . . is, in effect, refusal to be re-minded by the re-formers of memory" (p. 358). Deviant, defiant women refuse to be re-minded by obedience. They refuse

all of the deadening rules of the dominant caste. Radicalized, they deny the demand to obey. The woman is called, by Daly, into sin, the sin of courage fueled by unabated fury (pp. 281-285). Sin-full courage gives to the woman her "Power of Naming" just as the Power of Naming gives her Sin-full courage.

The woman's leaps of transformation begin with the woman's intuition of her Otherness from the patriarchal naming which has bound her. She seeks for, or is overcome by, "hologynic Metamorphosis" (p. 395). Within this metamorphosis women create deep friendships with each other. Women who make a centering Journey that participates in Be-ing, reach out to one another, calling them to the Journey also. Agreeing with S. Johnson's comments in a personal conversation that such a change is likely to be holographic (when one woman changes her way of be-ing, all women are affected) Daly believes a woman's Lust for transformation of her life will call to others in alluring, enchanting ways (p. 389).

The first rejection, the first disobedience, is rejection of the "malegod" (pp 400-404). Even when the malegod resists his dislodgement from her consciousness, the woman seeks for the shifting shaping of the soul. Thus freed, she can begin to confront the embeddedness of patriarchy within her own soul. She



must intuit and resist the sanctions of patriarchy which will seek to re-enslave her and stay with her Journey.

A genuine metamorphosis has four characteristics: a sense of otherness from patriarchal norms and values; consciousness of patriarchal sanctions which seek to re-enslave her; woman-identification; and persistence and commitment to the cause of women's freedom (pp. 397-398).

Empowered women, freed from patriarchal obedience, hurl themselves into new realms; into Self-creation; and into life as a metapatriarchal mutation (pp. 409-410). Such a woman has broken out of the code of symbols and systems which have blocked her Self-comprehension. Breaking the code means finding the meanings behind the meanings. Secondly, she breaks the rules or laws which have encased or erased her. She finds her own Tree of Life and protects it from those who would cut it down. She refuses to be controlled by other's force against her (p. 409).

## Notes

## Chapter 7

1. Freud writes, "With their entry into the phallic phase the differences between the sexes are completely eclipsed by their agreements. We are now obliged to recognize that the little girl is a little man. In boys, as we know, this phase is marked by the fact that they have learnt how to derive pleasurable sensations from their small penis and connect its excited state with their ideals of sexual intercourse. Little girls do the same thing with their still smaller clitoris. It seems with them all their masturbatory acts are carried out on this penis equivalent, and that the truly feminine vagina is still undiscovered by both sexes. It is true that there are a few isolated reports of early vaginal sensations as well, but it could not be easy to distinguish these from sensations in the anus or vestibulum; in any case they cannot play a great part" (1933[1932], p. 118)

2. In two separate publications (1924, 1925) Freud writes of the girl child's discovery of her missing penis and her castration complex which precedes her entry into the Oedipal phase of her development. In 1925 he writes, "A little girl behaves differently [than the boy]. She makes her judgment and her decision in a flash. She has seen it and knows that she is without it and wants to have it" (1925, p. 252). The consequences of her knowledge are a "sense of inferiority" (1925, p. 253), the "character trait of jealousy" (1925, p. 254), "opposition to masturbation" and the "elimination of clitoridal sexuality" as pre-conditions for development of femininity and vaginal sexuality (1925, p. 255), and a loosening of her love relationship with her mother as she "takes her father as her love object" (1925, pp. 254-256).

His greater elucidation of this concept occurs in the 1924 article. "The fear of castration being thus excluded in the little girl, a powerful motive also drops out for the setting-up of a super-ego and for the breaking-off of the infantile genital organization. . . The girl's Oedipus complex is much simpler than that of the small bearer of the penis; in my experience, it seldom goes beyond the taking of her mother's place and the adapting of a feminine attitude towards her father. Renunciation of the penis is not tolerated by the girl

without some attempt at compensation. She slips--along the line of a symbolic equation, one might say--from the penis to a baby. Her Oedipus complex culminates in a desire, which is long retained, to receive a baby from her father as a gift--to bear him a child. One has the impression that the Oedipus complex is then gradually given up because this wish is never fulfilled. The two wishes--to possess a penis and a child--remain strongly cathected in the unconscious and help prepare the female creature for her later sexual role" (1925, p. 179).

3. See Freud's extended discussion of the development of female masochism in A Child is Being Beaten (1919).

4. "The male sex-cell is actively mobile and searches out the female one, and the latter, the ovum, is immobile and waits passively. This behavior of the elementary sexual organisms is indeed a model for the conduct of sexual individuals during intercourse. The male pursues the female for the purpose of sexual union, seizes hold of her and penetrates into her" (1933[1932], p. 114).

5. Freud notes: "Along with the abandonment of clitoridal masturbation a certain amount of activity is renounced. Passivity now has the upperhand, and the girl's turning to her father is accomplished principally with the help of passive instinctual impulses. You can see that a wave of development like this, which clears the phallic activity out of the way, smooths the ground for femininity. If too much is not lost in the course of it through repression, this femininity may turn out to be normal. The wish with which the girl turns to her father is no doubt originally the wish for the penis which her mother has refused her and which she now expects from her father. The feminine situation is only established, however, if the wish for a penis is replaced by one for a baby, if that is, a baby takes the place of a penis in accordance with an ancient symbolic equivalence. . . . Not until the emergence of the wish for a penis does the doll-baby become a baby from the girl's father, and thereafter the aim of the most powerful feminine wish. Her happiness is great if later on this wish for a baby finds fulfillment in reality, and quite especially so if the baby is a little boy who brings the long-for penis with him " (1933[1932], p. 128).

6. See Freud's introductory lecture on "Femininity" (1933[1932]) in which he attributes women's "larger amount of narcissism" to penis envy. "The effect of penis-envy has a share, further, in the physical vanity of women, since they are bound to value their charms more highly as a late compensation for their original sexual inferiority" (p. 132).

7. Freud comments of the transfer of sensation from the clitoris to the vagina that it is the end process of the girl's successful development of femininity. "We are entitled to keep to our view that in the phallic phase of girls, the clitoris is the leading erotogenic zone. But it is not, of course, going to remain so. With the change to femininity the clitoris should wholly or in part hand over its sensitivity and at the same time its importance to the vagina. This would be one . . . task which a woman has to perform in the course of her development" (1933[1932]), p. 118.

8. Erikson writes: "Young women often ask whether they can 'have an identity' before they know whom they will marry and for whom they will make a home. Granted that something in the young woman's identity must keep itself open for the peculiarities of the man to be joined and of the children to be brought up, I think that much of a young woman's identity is already defined in her kind of attractiveness and in the selective nature of her search for the man (or men) by whom she wishes to be sought" (1968, p. 283).

### Section 3

#### The Dismembering Power of Rape

A woman who is raped understands her condition with metaphysical clarity.

Deena Metzger

It Is Always the Woman Who Is Raped

#### Introduction

Discussion of social or cultural forms (Geertz, 1973) raises issues of contextualization. As Geertz notes, the presence of behavior alone, without context, cannot establish the difference between a twitch or a wink. Understanding the context of a particular form allows the observer-interpreter more possibilities for questioning, and eventually understanding, the form.

The task of the interpreter of cultural forms is to construct a reading of the particular form within its own context. G. Bateson (1978, p. 46) comments that the necessary questions of cultural interpretation and understanding are not linear, causal ones. To understand cultural patterns, "how" questions need to supplement descriptive "what" and causal "why" ones. Descriptive data about cultural patterns of behavior cannot be understood without understanding the context within which it is embedded. Only by seeing the

context of a given behavior or set of behaviors is the observer-interpreter able to make sense of specific patterns of behavior. Counting ten facial gestures and even establishing their predictability over time, to use Geertz's metaphor, does not establish the meaning or sense of the facial gesture.

For both Geertz and Bateson, the hermeneutics of reading a cultural form become important. The position of observer within the field of the observed is implicit. There is no external, objective beginning place. For Geertz, the issue of participant-observation creates questions of the imaginative universe where behavioral acts become signs to meaning. For both of these anthropologists, an isolated countable event cannot yield its secrets; only in an awareness of pattern, matrix, context, or culture can sense be made from observed, behavioral data. Only by means of contextualized interpretation does the observer learn how to separate a twitch from a wink.

Consideration of rape as a cultural form or cultural text allows us to ask how this text becomes such a powerful one in the lives of women. As we saw in a variety of demographic studies, rape in women's lives happens within a context of widespread sexual violence. An event of rape is one discrete form of

sexual violence within a society which allows or encourages a variety of sexual assault forms against women.

While some women shrug off some types of sexual violation as a commonplace hazard in a world of co-existence with men, many women are intimidated or enraged by whistles on the street, obscene phone calls at night, or by encounters with peepers and flashers. D. Nastro (1989) in a letter to Pomona College's Re-View illustrates a woman's dilemma as she describes her personal encounter with street harassment. She asks, "Why is it that when a woman speaks the first thing that most men notice is her body rather than the content of her statement?" (p. 2) She describes an incident in a store where she asked the management to open an additional cashier's station.

Immediately, . . . two college-aged males in front of me turned around and looked me up and down. More disturbing was the fact that when I left the store and proceeded towards campus, these two males drove behind me honking their horn. For female pedestrians, this is a common occurrence. . . . I have conditioned myself to never turn around . . . to preserve my dignity and deny such obnoxious males my attention. Nevertheless, these males persisted. When I stepped down into a crosswalk, the males accelerated, honked again and then shouted, "Nice tits." (pp. 2, 12)

She reports that she needed to make decisions about communicating her distress about this incident. Initially undecided about repeating the young men's exact words, she continues:

I vacillated between sounding proper (saying that they had degraded my body) or sounding coarse (relating their true words). I did not want people to laugh nor did I want to attract more physical attention.

My puzzlement reminded me of the many rape statistics that I read. An outrageous number of rapes remain unreported because many women are ashamed to communicate their victimization and do not want to be further victimized by exposing the truth. (p. 12)

Nastro's dilemma is multi-faceted. Does she pay attention to her harassers? She does not, in advance, know the consequences of ignoring or paying attention. Her letter tells us that during the course of this incident her awareness was focused on her personal proximity to strange, young men who were openly and deliberately harassing her on a public street. Her deliberate refusal to pay visible attention to the young men's behaviors was based on a prior decision to ignore such aggressive street behavior.

Even after the verbal assault is over and she has had time to make decisions about reporting it, she is unsure about what she wants to do about this unsettling experience. If she complains about the young men's behavior, should she use their language and risk being



seen as coarse or deserving of ridicule? Or, should she retreat into abstractions which communicate less vividly the verbal assault she has endured? In addition, she wonders whether direct communication about the incident will draw more unwanted attention her way.

She is caught in a bind: silent about her violation, she appears to accept it passively. Sharing it, she invites ridicule and perhaps further abuse. Nastro's experience with a verbal assault is exemplary of many women's situation after an encounter with sexual violence.

A woman after rape must make exactly the same kinds of decisions. She must decide if she will hide the assault from others' awareness or if she will make the rape public information. Silent, she appears to accept her violation passively. By openly reporting her violation, she risks ambiguous future encounters with others. She risks judgments about her decisions. She risks having her anger or pain trivialized. She risks being seen as having invited the assault. She risks being re-assaulted in her contacts with others.

Catherine H's story (Anonymous, 1975) exemplifies some of the above concerns. Her story is one of stranger rape which occurred in the laundramat of the apartment building where she and her small son lived.

Attacking her with a scissors, the rapist threatened to kill her. When the rape was over, he tied her to a pipe and left. After untying herself and asking a neighbor to care for her small son, she called a male friend. He took her to the police station where "I was made to feel that somehow I had invited the rape and gotten what I deserved. Besides, they suggested, what was the big deal? I wasn't a virgin" (p. 16).

Next, her friend took her to the hospital emergency room where she was made to wait in an examination room, undressed, for two hours before seeing a physician. When the physician did see her, the vaginal examination was painful. "The doctor treated me like a hunk of meat. Apparently he wanted to let me know he had a sense of humor because he cracked, "You should keep better company in the future" (p. 16).

Returning home, accompanied by her male friend, she began to sob hysterically, crying the first tears she had shed since the rape. Her friend began to comfort her and she began to doze. Suddenly she became aware that her male friend was sexually aroused.

All at once I became aware that he was caressing me, not like a child but in a definitely erotic manner. He wanted to make love! "No, no . . . not now, not tonight, I said.

"Oh, come on," he whispered. "You did it with him." Even he thought--this man who claimed to

love me--he was as sick as all the rest. I exploded. I threw books and screamed the worst obscenities I could think of. If he hadn't left, I would have killed him." (p. 16)

Although Catherine H. successfully identified her rapist in a police line up, his wife and neighbor swore that he had been home all day. She comments, "As terrifying as the rape was, afterwards became a total nightmare" (p. 17).

The demography of rape and sexual violence demonstrates that rape is not a rare, isolated phenomenon which affects a few women. Its prevalence indicates that it is a cultural form. D. Nastro and Catherine H. tell us of their own particular experiences with sexual violence. Yet, while rape affects women one by one, it carries a more total message than only the violence of one person toward a second one. Rape is a cultural form whose particularity reveals more than its particularity. It reveals the values of a culture which tolerates it.

Of the relationships of cultural form to culture, Geertz (1980) writes:

Two approaches must converge if one is to interpret a culture: description of particular forms . . . as defined expressions; and a contextualization of such forms within the whole structure of meaning of which they are a part and in terms of which they get their definition (p. 103).

To accomplish contextualization of forms and visualization of the forms themselves, the researcher must eventually isolate at least some of their essential elements. She needs to determine the significance of these same elements to understand the symbolic nature of the form. In other words, the observer hopes to reach two kinds of understanding, understanding of context and understanding of the form itself (Geertz, 1980, pp. 103-104).

For example, if visiting Martians were to observe baseball as an American cultural form, they would need to understand the cultural context in which the game is played. However, that alone would not be sufficient; they would need to understand specific bits of information such as catcher's mits, bats, squeeze plays and other assorted objects, players and rules. Because a cultural form expresses "a view of the ultimate nature of reality" and concomitantly shapes the "existing conditions of life to be consonant with that reality" (p. 104), the visiting Martians would need to understand the context of total life and to understand that context would need to understand baseball. Baseball, for these Martians, could then serve to "yield the faith enclosed within it" (p. 104).

Thus, cultural forms become, for Geertz, public texts to be read and interpreted. The goal of such

reading and interpreting is to learn the enclosed faith which in turn reveals the whole. In his work, hermeneutical issues of reader and text emerge. The reader-observer establishes the field of observation, identifying the cultural story to be read (p. 135). That which is to be read exists outside the reader. It is in the interaction of reader and text (cultural form) that understanding will emerge.

Elaborating further, Geertz (1983) claims that cultural phenomena (forms) should be treated as "significative systems posing expositive questions" (p. 3). Understanding cultural forms is not an issue of explaining "grand textures of cause and effect" (p. 6), nor of "stripping them down to abstract rule systems that supposedly 'generate' them" (p. 12). Rather, understanding becomes a move towards a conceptualization of social life and its organization in terms of symbols, by which Geertz means signs, representations, and significant. The meaning, or sense, of symbols must be grasped if the observer is to "understand that organization and formulate its principles" (p. 21).

Interpretive explanation . . . trains its attention on what institutions, actions, images, events, customs, all the usual objects of social-scientific interest mean to those whose institutions, actions, customs, and so on they are. (p. 22)

By using a textual analogy, Geertz is able to envision human conduct as sentences, discourse and genre. The experienter of the text and the reader of the text meet in encounters of interpretation, thus widening the possibility of genuine conversation between them.

Experienced behavior is evanescent in that it flies by in time. However, meanings of behavior persist in a way that action by itself cannot. The question, therefore, becomes that of the "fixation of meaning from the flow of events . . . from what happened, thought from thinking, culture from behavior" (p. 31). It is in this manner that social customs become readable. The researcher hopes to "connect action to its sense; not behavior to its determinants" (p. 34). Geertz concludes with a solemn advisory to his readers, "How . . . the texts that we do not just invent or witness but live have the consequence they do remains very far from clear" (p. 35).

Noting that texts are characterized by discrepant, deliquescent, or even multiple meanings, Geertz believes that hermeneutical processes for establishing the context of the text become essential to understanding (p. 149). For Geertz, one important issue lies in the simultaneous construction of

community within culture and culture within community.  
Community is the shop in which thoughts are constructed  
or deconstructed. Therefore,

convergent data . . . diverse, even rather  
miscellaneous, both to the type and degree of  
precision and generality, unstandardized facts,  
opportunisticly collected and variously  
portrayed, which yet turn out to shed light on one  
another for the simple reason that the individuals  
they are descriptions, measure, or observations of  
are directly involved in one another's lives.  
(p. 156)

That rape is a cultural form, and not only an  
idiosyncratic event in which a crazed man takes  
advantage of a powerless woman, is evidenced by its  
presence in some societies and its absence in others.  
P. R. Sanday (1981a, 1981b, 1982b) examined the issue  
of rape by means of a retrospective review of published  
cultural descriptions or formal anthropological  
studies. She reviewed studies of 156 tribal societies  
by using data from 1750 BC (Babylonia) up to the 1960s.  
Six regions of the globe were included in her review.  
These were Sub-Saharan Africa, Mediterranean  
Circumference, East Eurasia, Insular Pacific, North  
America, and South/Central America. She examined the  
question of whether rape is an inherent, natural  
biological act of males toward females. In addition,  
she further examined the question of whether male  
sexual behavior is brutish in its struggle to control  
the female and her sexual nature. She hypothesized

that all sexual behavior, grounded as it is in biology, nevertheless is more shaped by cultural and social factors than by biological ones.

In her findings, 47% of these societies were rape free; 35% were intermediate; and 18% were rape prone (1981b, p. 9). She concludes, therefore, that rape is not a universal characteristic of all tribal societies and that the incidence of rape varies widely across cultural groupings. In other words, rape is not a natural pattern of sexual behavior which results from male biology. Rather, rape is a cultural form. As Geertz might comment, the cultural form of rape can be examined to yield the faith concealed within it.

In rape prone societies men routinely rape conquered women as an aftermath of warring activities; rape is a ceremonial act; rape is seen as one way in which men can control women of their own tribe; rape or the threat of rape is used to punish disobedience (p. 7). The socio-cultural context of rape prone societies is a culture of violence in which women are property and in which there is a social ideology of dominance (p. 21).

In contrast, rape free societies are those where women have ceremonial importance, are treated with respect, and prestige of women is linked to their female reproductive and productive roles. All forms of



interpersonal violence are minimized. Reverence for the environment is universal. Ceremonial violence is absent between the two sexes. Tribal decision-making involves both sexes. Attempts to control or dominate each other are either absent or minimized. Both sexes are believed to be fully complementary; duties of men and women may or may not overlap but the work of both is seen as indispensable to the tribe. The power spheres of men and women appear to be balanced. Women's power may or may not be seen as sacred, however, it is celebrated and recognized. Finally, there is some form of a female earth goddess (pp. 16-17). Sanday concludes from her extensive cross-cultural analysis, "Men who are conditioned to respect the female virtues of growth and the sacredness of life do not violate women" (p. 26).

Thus, it is possible to conclude that the singular and particular text of the rape of any woman is layered and enmeshed in her own culture's understandings and beliefs about women. Her culture's stories about women describe: female sexuality and female sexual desire; female-male relationships; rape and other forms of sexual violence; women's personal responsibility for what happens to them; virginity and sexual experience; female attractiveness; feminine evil; female masochism; women's nature as whores or potential whores; women's

so-called, hidden, secretive desires to be violated; and beliefs concerning the nature of sacredness or divinity. In addition, they describe creation of humanity and a desired pattern of relationships within human relationships.

In addition to stories which directly relate to the woman and her cultural existence, cultural beliefs and stories (theories) describe the power(s) of representation to elicit behavior. Beliefs about representation and its power to shape life interact with cultural stories about women and their nature. Cultural stories embed multiple meanings. In the context of the story, as well as in its telling or enactment, it becomes possible to see the embedded faith within.

Some cultural stories about rape are integrated by the woman into her own consciousness. Enmeshed within and encircled by her culture's system(s) of meaning, the woman absorbs the central, guiding stories or myths. Internalized, these social myths form and inform her consciousness. Multiple layers of stories shape her awareness of herself and her world.

Not all of the stories which shape her life are lodged in her conscious awareness. Some of them function at preconscious levels. Some may be denied access to her awareness by personal or cultural taboos

against knowing. The woman may even hold contradictory stories as essential to her assumptions about self and world. She may cognitively know, for example, that no woman deserves to be raped. However after an event of rape, she may identify a second set of beliefs. In these beliefs, women only get raped if they deserve it. The woman's experience of rape is informed by two widely divergent belief or assumption systems about her own responsibility in a rape situation. In one, women are not to be blamed for what has happened to them. In the other, women carry full responsibility for being raped. These two stories are embedded within her culture's stories about women. They exist as external realities which surround her experience of her own rape. They function as internal realities as well. Rape, which she experiences as a discrete interpersonal interaction, is surrounded by stories. Even though she has never faced a rapist before, she is not ignorant of rape's complex meanings within her society. She knows that rape is a frightening, personal assault on her humanity.

As an interpersonal transaction, a rape event is filled with demands for obedience and compliance. The rapist, by the act of rape, insists that the woman do what he wants. While it is common for rape to be seen as totally sexual, its victims report it as a violent

attack on their humanity. Active refusal to submit often elicits physical force or the threat of life threatening violence. Rape, as a cultural form, reminds women that submission to the authority of men is seen as an essential aspect of women's existence in patriarchal societies.

Failure to obey men remains deeply threatening to women. Patriarchal culture has informed women that failures to obey men may lead to a loss of men's love or a loss of God's love and guidance. The rapist's threat to mutilate and destroy her if she fails to obey him is a reprise of earlier teachings from her culture that she should obey men. The woman is bound to obedience by cultural myths which demand it of her.

The woman's response to her rapist's demands for obedience are influenced by several factors: introjected stories about women's nature as compliant, submissive, helpless, docile, and dependent; stories about women's desire to be controlled; stories about rape as a deranged act of a deviant man; and media exploitation of rape as a sensational event. Women who escape rape are not newsworthy. Women who are raped are. Rarely does the woman, confronted with the imminence of rape, have multiple images of escape from rape as guides for making her own choices. Instead, she is acculturated to awareness of rape as a deadly

cultural form from which she will only escape by compliance. Yet, once raped, her compliance will be used against her. The cultural form of rape encircles her. During a rape event, she feels her life is endangered. After rape, however, she judges her decision-making process about obedience and compliance by cultural standards of resistance which contradict the earlier standards of compliance.

J. Katz (1984) illustrates some of these ambiguities in her account of rape and her recovery from it. Awakened after midnight in her own home when the rapist covered her mouth and said, "Don't scream or I'll kill you," Katz felt immediate terror. She wondered if he would kill her or mutilate her. She writes that the rapist told her to open her legs. She reports consciously making a decision to disobey his command. Deciding to fight back, she struggled against him. At that point, the rapist threatened her with physical harm. Quieting herself, she tried to remind herself of other times when she had acquiesced in sexual relationships and hadn't really wanted to. She tried to persuade herself that this event was like those events. She writes:

But it wasn't. This was incredibly different. I had no rights. I was an object. I had no power, no knowledge of what was to happen, no sense of whether I'd be dead or alive, no information as to who this stranger was or what he was going to do

or how long he was going to stay. I didn't have my body. I was totally under his control. This was not sex--this was an invasion." (p. 4)

During the rape, Katz reports she tried to block psychological awareness of what was happening to her physically. She dissociated her body from her mind. She describes the results of the terror felt during the twenty minutes it took for the rapist to complete his assault.

In that time period I had gone from feeling that I was a confident, powerful woman, to feeling like a helpless, dehumanized object. Not only had I been raped, but I felt stripped of my dignity. In disbelief and shock, I repeated over and over, "I've been raped." The events of the past twenty minutes became surreal. (p. 6)

Cognitively she knew she was not responsible for being raped. Yet in the hospital emergency room, after an encounter with an unsympathetic nurse, she began to cry and to blame herself for the rape. Wondering how she had set up the rape, shame overwhelmed her. At a woman friend's reassurance that she was not to blame, she accepted that knowledge intellectually. Nevertheless, she continued to search for what she could have and should have done in order to have avoided the rape.

Encountering rape, the woman's assumptive world (her collection of stories) is challenged. Her external world of predictable relationships is also challenged. No longer able to automatically and easily

trust the world and its usual relationships, she turns inward. There she finds a self in disarray. A woman in a rape support group cried out in desperation, "I want my old self back and I can't find her." The self whom the woman knew before rape was no longer available to her. After rape, she was a stranger to herself existing in a strange world. B. Cohn (1975) writes:

Once a woman has been raped she lives more or less permanently with the fear of rape in the back of her mind. Rape changes the way she feels about the world. . . . What she loses forever is a belief in the goodness of people and a trust in others. She loses faith in the power of reason and reasonableness. She pays the final, most brutal price for being a woman in a world ruled by men. (p. 12)

For the woman to resist the story of rape in her life, she must, as E. Janeway suggests (1981), embody her own power. She must learn to hear and resist stories which oppress her. Especially in situations of shame, surprise, or pain, she must refuse to image herself as subhuman. In essence, she must learn to resist the cultural form of rape even as she is being raped. A dissenting, alert mind "stands a better chance of saving the body it inhabits than does a subservient robot" (p. 215).

Yet resistance to rape is difficult for women. Section Three identifies several reasons for rape's powerful hold upon women. Throughout Sections One and Two, several hypotheses have emerged about the

continuing power of rape in women's lives. The first of these hypotheses lies in the experience of terror as women encounter rape. The threat to physical survival, which rape represents, captures the woman within a psycho-biological response of terror. Chapters 8 and 9 explore anxiety theory as a way of understanding the power of terror to immobilize the woman's own powers of self-healing after the rape event is over.

A second hypothesis has emerged in the discussion of cultural myths. These stories of women's inferiority and incompleteness, when combined with theological and scientific explanations of submission and obedience as natural for women, establish a cultural matrix of stories which support male violence against women. Section Three asserts that women's obedience to men is the central faith of rape and of the culture which supports it. The dynamics of obedience as an interpersonal transaction are described in terms of the double bind.

Initially described by anthropologist G. Bateson and his associates, the interactional presence of a double bind between two people creates a functional inability in the recipient of that bind to make choices which are rational and self-supporting. Chapter 10 identifies obedience as the core bind expressed in rape and speculates that this bind functionally inhibits the



woman's self-healing. Liberating herself from rape's pervasive claim upon her life and psyche is a process of becoming unbound. The double-bind of rape expresses the central tenet of patriarchal cultures. Women are to obey men in all things, even unto death of the self or the body.

In the concluding chapter of this section, the therapist's journey as a listening woman is described. Criticism within the feminist community about therapy as a form of rape is described. Some potentials and pitfalls of women's story telling as a healing modality are identified.

## Chapter 8

### Terror and the Dismemberment of Rape

Suddenly I was terrified. They were now icy cold rapists--not normal, not predictable. I only thought of newspaper articles about women found dead, always without pants, always molested. I suddenly saw my body lying at the end of this dead-end street. Those hard faces, that lack of concern or compassion. I wanted to live. My mind was speeding. One man was on top of me, and one was holding me. Suddenly all that mattered was that I lived.

Susan's Story  
Succumbing to Rape

### Introduction

Once women had begun to put the rape story into their own language and to have it heard by other women, questions began to be asked about the power of rape in women's lives during their recovery period. Susan's story, (Cohn, 1975) for example, emerged in a women's sharing session during which another woman had shared a recent rape. Prior to this meeting, Susan had only described her rape to an unsympathetic physician. For ten years she had lived in silence.

J. Katz (1984) was raped in September, 1976. During December of that year, she wrote a journal entry

during a day when her "mind swirled and her body trembled" (p. 29). She quotes from that journal entry in her book:

I am feeling so out of control. So depressed. My fears, my paranoia are overwhelming me. I can't focus. Run away--Be strong. I'm caught. Uptight.

Scared--OH GOD, am I scared. I feel so vulnerable again. How much can I take? How can I keep on going? I just can't . . . can't.

. . . I'm being torn apart. Inside out. Ripping away layer after layer. Coat after coat. Defenses lost--Strength to battle is being extinguished. Dying a slow--slow death inside. No energy to move. No energy to think. No energy to cope. No energy to work. I am losing control. (pp. 29-30)

Several years after the above was written, in the preface to her book about recovery from rape, she claims that writing it became part of her extended process of healing. She comments about her recovery that it was difficult and time-consuming.

The healing process has not been an easy one. Although I had much assistance after being raped to deal with my reactions to the rape, my emotional state was still unstable. No amount of cognitive understanding could make the feelings dissipate. At times, I attempted to repress my emotions and at other times, to completely deny them. There were days when I wished the experience would vanish into outer space. I looked for easy cures and temporary relief. And yet, no matter how frantically I searched for my fairy godmother with her magic wand, the pain remained. I had to experience the traumas and aftermath of rape. In retrospect, I wonder whether if not for my support group I would have made the journey back at all, or remained emotionally crippled for the rest of my life as a result of the rape. (1984, p. x)

B. Mehrhof and P. Kearon (1973) write that while rape appears to renew a sense of power in the rapist, it creates submission and terror in his victim. The woman in a rape situation feels threatened with death. In terror, she is often emotionally immobilized, without physical freedom to flee her assailant. They speculate that the woman in a closed field, one from which she cannot escape, incorporates the reality created by her rapist. Her alternative to that incorporation, according to them, is to go mad (1973, p. 229).

Some of the issues which these authors believe are relevant to the woman's immobilization are: (1) real or imagined lack of kinetic energy during the attack; (2) the woman's fragile sense of her own reality and self-worth; and (3) the woman's inner sense that it is her status of femaleness which is being punished. They claim that lesson which a woman receives during rape is one of her objective, unchanging subordination to men (1973, p. 229). They write:

Women, through terror unable to act, do not test the reality dictated by sexist ideology. When an individual woman manages to see that rape is an act which oppresses and degrades her and limits her freedom, when she sees it as political and useful to all males, she cannot count upon support from other women. Many women believe that rape is an act of sick men or is provoked by the female. Thus women as a class do not have consensus. (1973, p. 233)

It is easy to understand why women are terrified during rape events. Stranger or acquaintance rape removes self-control from the woman. She does not control what happens to her own body, her own body-space, or her own time. In many situations, massive physical violence is used. The man may use only his muscles to control the woman or he may use some form of weaponry.

In stranger rape, she does not know her assailant. She does not know why he has chosen her as his victim. She has no prior interpersonal knowledge about his own personal characteristics, nor about the range of his proclivity to violence. During the current AIDS epidemic, she does not know about his sexual history and potential as a carrier of the AIDS virus. She has no way of judging the full intent of his presence in her life. Does he intend only to rape her, or does he intend to mutilate and, perhaps, even kill her?

After stranger rape is over and the woman enters the post-rape period, she initially mistrusts most men. She does not know who raped her; any man could be her rapist. In addition, she must make decisions about how she will relate to men in her life. Katz says of this latter phenomenon that she tested the reactions of each man she encountered. In particular, she would tell men about her rape and watch closely to observe their

immediate response to her. If the man joked, avoided the statement, or made a derogatory comment, she would have little to do with him. Secondly, she tested men in the area of sexual relationships. If they did not allow her to control the sexual aspects of the relationship, she did not continue in the relationship (1984, pp. 45-51).

Katz describes a period following her rape during which she was having intercourse with several men. At the time, she saw it as a way of proving that rape had not destroyed her pleasure in sexual relationships. However, in retrospect, years later, she identifies multiple reasons for this behavior. First, having someone sleep with her, allowed her to get actual sleep. She gained protection during the night. Secondly, exploited in the rape, she was now attempting to deal with her anger and hostility by exploiting men. In addition, she experienced dehumanization during the rape. She worked to make subsequent sexual encounters meaningless (pp. 45-47).

Acquaintance rape, in contrast, is done by someone the woman knows. Her basic sense of trust in that relationship is shattered by the rapist. What she assumed to be predictable in her prior relationship with the man has instead become unpredictable. In a sense, she loses use of her internal relationship

gyroscope. She may grow to mistrust her own judgment capacities. After acquaintance rape, the woman minutely examines her own prior perceptions of the rapist to figure out why rape happened. She may not be able to believe that this other person could actually have raped her.

M. Koss (1988b) describes college women's frequent response to date rape as that of disbelief. After the rape has happened, the woman reviews her behavior and believes she gave mixed signals to her rapist. She accepts responsibility for the sexual act even when she protested and said no. She resolves to be clearer about her wish not to have intercourse and continues to date the man. Only after the second rape, does she understand his behavior as rape. It is after the second rape by the same man that many college women then break off the relationship with the man. Their first confidantes about being raped are most often peers, rather than authority figures.

In my own experiences with college-age women, I find that they often do not define sexual assault as rape until a woman peer insists that they talk with someone about the assault. I have learned when young women say to me, "I have this friend who was raped." that I should not automatically assume the speaker is addressing her own experience. Sometimes she may be.

However, in fact, often she is on a scouting expedition to find adult help for persuading a friend that she was assaulted and needs help in coping with it.

I also think she is likely testing acceptance for her friend as well. My response to this type of comment now has become a very general one. I usually acknowledge how difficult the topic is for women to talk about and ask, "How would you like me to help?" If the woman is scouting, she is usually quite specific. She nearly always says, "I would like to bring my friend to meet you." At that time, we discuss how this may be done in helpful ways, so that the friend does not feel betrayed in a confidence shared with me by her friend.

For most women, whether their situation is one of stranger rape or of acquaintance rape, terror continues after the rape event is over. As we have seen in the chapter on clinical research, post-rape trauma involves going through many more experiences of anxiety and terror as the personality adjusts to the assault. Nightmares and flashbacks of her experience continue to plague her. She may have anxiety attacks during daytime hours. Her responses to this continuing experience of anxiety may be to move, to change jobs, to drop out of school, to change her marital status, to



isolate herself from friends, to develop phobic responses to many routine tasks of daily living or to build somatic defenses.

M. Braude, D. Rose, and H. Lehrman (1987) have prepared an educational cassette tape for psychotherapists about post-traumatic stress disorder in rape victims. In that tape, psychiatrist D. Rose describes the intrapsychic dynamics of rape victims after rape. She chronicles women's long term responses after rape.

The threat of physical death occurs during rape as the rapist overpowers the woman in physical, emotional and cognitive ways. The physical violence of the actual rape, as well as the verbalized threats of violence, make the woman sensorily aware of the "rapist's murderous rage" (1987). He often threatens to return if she tells anyone of the rape. Wanting to live, she does whatever she can to survive the assault.

Intrapsychic death, which occurs as a result of the rape, involves: (1) a permanent loss of aspects of the self; (2) establishment of character defenses; and (3) strong fears or beliefs that the rapist will return to harm her again. During the rape, the woman loses her sense of omnipotence, her sense of invulnerability, her basic trust in others, and surrounds herself with a "trauma membrane" (1987).

During and after rape, the woman's familiar pre-rape intrapsychic world gets supplanted by a new one in which there are new and different feelings, cognitions, wishes, fantasies, and defenses. Many of these are foreign to the woman and contribute to her fear of losing control or going crazy. Intrusive, intrapsychic thoughts and impulses alternate with psychic numbing. Flashbacks create severe anxiety as the woman's defense system appears to be failing. She may develop eating and sleeping disorders. Her sexual lifestyle often changes. According to Rose, more than twenty-five percent of sexually active women become abstinent. Many more have sexual difficulties (1987).

Rose claims there are four defenses utilized by all women: these are avoidance, dissociative spectrum disorders, re-enactment, and self-blame. The strength of the woman's anxiety and avoidance is revealed by her incomplete accounting of the rape sequence. She may obsessively fixate upon some details of the rape, while avoiding others. Rose states, "In my experience, the details and affect emerge over a period of at least several months to as long as four years and I've never had a victim present a complete account of the rape experience with the affect being present" (1987). In

addition to avoiding discussion of the rape event itself, the woman may organize her life around avoiding any recall of it at all.

Dissociative spectrum defenses are those which result from splitting of the personality in some manner. This is frequently experienced by the woman as a shattering of her old self. Re-enactment defenses are those in which the woman symbolically or actually re-enacts the rape in self and/or other destructiveness. Self-blaming involves either character and/or behavioral blaming of the self for the rape. Even though this self-blaming often appears irrational to others, the woman appears obsessed with it and does not easily give it up.

The strength of the woman's terror during rape and the residual amount of anxiety which remains are evidenced in many ways. Why the residual terror is so resistive to psychic desensitization is less clear.

It may help us to understand a woman's life experience after rape if we examine the way anxiety operates in human life. In order to describe the operation of a human emotion as a theoretical concept, we must look at its earliest roots in human experience and trace some of the ways in which it manifests itself throughout life.

Anxiety theory, per se, is not usually described in rape literature as a source of information about women's responses after rape. I think a common assumption is that a woman's anxiety is readily explained by its causation in the rape event. In other words, her anxiety is viewed through the lens of the observer's common sense. Of course she is anxious. Her life was in danger. What else could she be?

Although it is realistic to describe women's experiences with anxiety during the rape as survival fears, I think it is less satisfactory to describe rape recovery anxiety by that generalized conception of her emotional status. Once the rape is over and she is through the acute crisis reaction, she often continues to feel and act as if the rape could begin all over again in exactly the same scenario. She is constantly behaving as if her danger is a present reality rather than a past one. Katz comments that it took a year and a half until she could sleep through the night without waking up, startled and terrified, with any small sound (1984, p. 26).

While much of today's clinical understanding of anxiety has emerged from Harry Stack Sullivan's work with schizophrenics (1953a, 1953b, 1954, 1962), it appears relevant to the experience of rape victims as well.

For one thing, it is increasingly common to find a history of sexual assault in adult patients with dissociative spectrum pathologies. With a diagnosis of multiple personality, borderline personality, or fugue states, common professional wisdom now includes the therapeutic imperative to ask about early experiences with sexual assault. This is increasingly believed to be true also of anorexia nervosa and sleep disorders.

In addition, the presence of dissociative defenses (depersonalization, dissociation, amnesia, and fugue states) among rape survivors signals the possibility of utilizing anxiety theory for assistance in understanding the rape victim. These disorders, so frequently seen in severe pathology such as schizophrenia, are also prevalent in the configuration of disorders which are included in the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder.

I do not mean to suggest the rape victim is a schizophrenic. Rather, I wish to say that she may share some distortions of perceptual reality with them. For example, use of dissociative spectrum defenses, whether as a result of long term psychotic processes or as a result of intense, life-threatening stress, prohibits her from having access to her own life

history. She is unable to integrate psychic content about the rape into her life history because it is not available to her in consciousness.

### Anxiety Theory

To my knowledge the most comprehensive study of anxiety and terror has been done by Sullivan (1953a, 1953b, 1954, 1962), the American born psychiatrist who moved rapidly away from Freudian understandings into anthropological psychiatry. He spent much of his career preoccupied with schizophrenic experience among men. None of his work deals with rape and little of it deals with women. In using his work, it is necessary to recall the maleness of his patients and its grounding within institutional psychiatry.

Sullivan identifies a crucial premise for his work; any human is more like any other human than she is like an animal or other life form. Thus, schizophrenia is a human experience. Its terrors are human. They are communicated by a human and can, therefore, be observed and understood by other humans (1962).

In addition, he was deeply committed to the epistemological stance that experience is the basis of all human knowing. Every human has multiple channels

of contact with events around her. These channels include sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste, and kinesthesia. His work on anxiety also implies, but does not name as such, an interpersonally channeled empathy transmitter-receptor for anxiety.

Empathy makes itself known first in the infant-mother relationship. It is a linkage that precedes any understanding of emotional expression. Empathy is best demonstrated by emotional contagion between the mother and the infant. When the mother is anxious, the infant senses it and becomes anxious also. Empathy's most formative influence in an infant's life is from six to twenty-seven months (1953a, p. 17). Preverbal in its roots, Sullivan speculates empathy continues on throughout life. As the individual matures and gains consensually validated language and thought, it has less and less developmental importance.

Sullivan also believed that the self's boundary is permeable, allowing cultural processes to shape a complex animal at birth into a human being. The transformation from animal to human involves continuous processes of interaction. Humans are separated from the animal and plant worlds by the fact that humans, to survive, require a continuous interchange with an environment that includes culture (1953b, pp. 20, 32).

Experience for Sullivan is anything lived or undergone by the individual. It "is the inner component of events in which a living organism participates" (1953b, p. 26). However, experience of an event is not the same as the event in which the organism participates. Someone who looks at a frog needs to realize her perception of the frog is not the same as the frog. What is perceived is a pattern of light which is transformed into the perception of a frog by comparing inner sensory data with a concept, frog.

In other words, there is a relatively "outer" object giving rise to something which "puts me in contact with" it, as we say; and there is a very complex, relatively private or "inner" bundle of changes of state here or there, to which I may refer as the act of perceiving, which results in the percept. Nothing in the present state of our acquaintance with the universe suggests any necessary correspondence between the perceived characteristics of a course of events like the frog as frog and the ultimate "real" characteristics of this course of events. (1953b, pp. 26-27)

For experience to be totally accessible and utilized in learning, Sullivan accepts E. Sapir's hypothesis that elements or symbols of human language must become associated with whole classes of experience rather than with isolated bits of experience. "Only so is communication possible, for the single experience lodges in an individual consciousness and is, strictly speaking, incommunicable" (1953b, p. 24). For



communication to be successful, a single experience must be referred to a class of experiences which are defined and accepted by the community in which the individual is lodged. Language and the community of meanings shape what the person is able to recognize with her consciousness. Culture shapes each individual into its particular community of individuals.

Human sentience and the ability to recall (the phenomenon of human memory) provide the primary data from which humans develop information about the world. The act of perception of sentience is "interpolated between whatever outside reality is and what we have in our minds" (1953b, p. 28). What is in the human mind begins in experience. Sullivan identifies three modes of experience. These are the prototaxic, parataxic and syntaxic modes (1953b, pp. 28-29).

The prototaxic mode of experience is preverbal, primitive and infantile. It is the simplest, the earliest and most abundant mode of experience. The infant prehends the current state of its being through its zones of interaction with the world, for example, its mouth and oral zone. The infant's felt experience is vague, undifferentiated and undefined. Prehension precedes perception and may, Sullivan speculates, lie behind all perception. For example, an in utero prehension would be the infant's experience of the

mother's heart beat. Its lasting power in infancy and childhood is implied by the fact that recorded sounds of an in utero human heart beat have the potential to lull fearful and anxious children to sleep.\*

The parataxic mode emerges as the infant matures. As a part of that maturation, the wholeness of undifferentiated experience breaks. The child experiences various sequences of things to be related, whether or not in fact they are related. In essence, the child begins to fashion a private system of meaning. Sullivan characterizes this private system as autistic. By autistic, he means a "primary, unsocialized, unacculturated state of symbol activity" (1953a, p. 17). Once an ability to recognize differences emerges, the child can begin to develop rudimentary hypotheses about experience. Accepting and forbidding gestures of others are recognized. Anxiety and the relief of tension preoccupy the infant in its waking hours.

The child begins to discriminate differences in vocalization, postural signals, timing differences in vocalization, rhythm differences in bodily motions. Sullivan believes the organization of this data becomes "signs of signs" (1953b, p. 87) from which the infant can begin to learn how to make approach-avoidance decisions. This is important since humans wish, at all

times, to avoid anxiety. The child, by organizing private meanings, learns to interpret the behavior of others. In addition, the child gradually learns to control signs she sends to others.

Sullivan reminds his readers that "you must remember that signs are signs only when there is an interpreter to attach meaning to a body of otherwise physical phenomena" (1953b, p. 88). He uses the common sign of a traffic marker to make his point. A traffic sign is a piece of tin on a stake. It becomes a sign only when it "evokes its appropriate meaning in the person who perceives it. The person has the sign" (1953b, p. 101).

Language, in its role of signifier, is actually a matter of sound patterns. These sound patterns are culturally conditioned into acceptable language. In the parataxic mode of experience, the child uses language in an autistic manner. By experimentation with sound, the child creates a private language. The child, who consistently uses "ra" to signify a bowl of cereal, may eventually communicate to her parents that she is hungry. However, most people will not necessarily understand her insistent "ra" as a request for food (1953b, p. 182).

When the child has more than rudimentary language skills and begins to validate her private language with

the language of others, the syntactic mode of experience begins. In the syntactic mode of experience, meanings have been consensually validated within the community of people. The organization of experience within a system of verbs and nouns is the necessary action by which children move into syntactic experiencing. Words and gestures do not carry meaning but evoke meaning. Consensually validated experience begins when the child has learned the precisely correct word for an experience or thing. The word "cereal" means the same thing to the child as it does to the child's hearer-interpreter. Proper use of the word cereal in a sentence requesting it or talking about it provides satisfactory evidence of syntactic thinking to observers. The sound (cereal) is consensually validated by a community of people to mean a certain type of food. Only by means of correct interpretation does the sound become a sign that communicates.

Within his understanding of experience, Sullivan introduces two polar opposites in their pure, absolute form. These are euphoria and the absolute tension of terror (1953b, pp. 34-37). Euphoria equates with utter well-being. Once euphoria is defined, Sullivan largely dismisses this concept from his discussions. However, its polar opposite, the experience of terror becomes a critical factor in understanding human experience.

The initial experience of terror occurs in the prototaxic mode of experience. When the physico-chemical needs of the infant are not met and survival is threatened, the infant prehends disaster. Sullivan uses the need for air as the infantile paradigm for human anxiety. When the infant becomes anoxic, she gives out distress behaviors. "Recurrence of this danger of anoxia at any time in life is accompanied by an extraordinary form of fear which we refer to as terror" (1953b, p. 49). Any interference with oxygen transfer creates in the infant that "which is suggestive in appearance of what we later in life would unquestionably call rage behavior" (1953b, p. 49). The most sure way of terrorizing any individual is to interfere with air transfer. The objectively verifiable threat to the biological integrity of the organism is subjectively experienced as terror.

There are four helpful ways of dealing with the tension of anxiety or terror: (1) removal or destruction of the fear inducing circumstances; (2) escape from the field of fear-inducing circumstances; (3) neutralization (for example, an appropriate, equivalent, believable counter threat); and (4) ignoring the anxiety provoking circumstance (1953b, p. 56).

In the context of prototaxic, preverbal behaviors, he comments about crying that it is an attempt to elicit tenderness so that help is given in removing the fear-inducing circumstance. Crying attempts to communicate terror and requests helpful action by others to ameliorate the situation.

From the standpoint of the infant's prototaxic experience, this crying, insofar as it evokes appropriate tender behavior by the mothering one, is adequate and appropriate action by the infant to remove or escape fear-provoking dangers. Crying thus comes to be differentiated as action appropriate to accomplish the foreseen relief of fear. (1953b, p. 53)

Sullivan places anxiety at the center of his developmental theory. Infantile experiences of biologically triggered anxiety become the prototype for the analogous uncanny feelings of the psyche (awe, dread, horror, loathing or terror) in adults.

While mild gradients of anxiety may help an individual learn from unpleasant experience, severe anxiety is equated to a severe blow on the head. Confusion and a disturbance of the factors of sentience result. The experience of this anxiety creates unsureness about the situation in which the anxiety occurred. This phenomenon is of such importance in adult therapy, because of the matter "of getting the

patient to see just when anxiety intervened, because the area is disturbed in such a way that it is almost as if it had not been" (1953b, p. 152).

The child, as part of her developmental journey, will develop a good me, the obedient or compliant self, and a bad me, the disobedient or recalcitrant self. With experiences of severe, unmitigated anxiety, the child will also split off part of its experience into the not me. The uncanny feelings of dread, horror, terror, or panic are attached to this dissociated experience in the not me.

The not me results from the organization of experience that has been subjected to severe and/or suddenly precipitated anxiety. The person has not been able to make any sense of, or develop a realistic grasp of, the particular circumstances which dictated the encounter with this anxiety. Sullivan reiterates the blow on the head metaphor several times.

As I have said, very intense anxiety precipitated by a sudden, intense, negative emotional reaction on the part of the significant environment has more than a little in common with a blow on the head. It tends to erase any possibility of elaborating the exact circumstances of its occurrence, and about the most the person can remember in retrospect is a somewhat fenestrated account of the event in the immediate neighborhood. (1953b, p. 314)

To avoid re-experiencing severe anxiety and the uncanny awareness of the not me, the personality works

to avoid intense anxiety. Processes of dissociation are maintained, according to Sullivan, by constant alertness or vigilance. This alertness is designed to prevent the personality from re-contacting the anxiety which initially triggered the dissociation. With dissociation, part of psychic living occurs outside of conscious awareness. That which created the anxiety is not allowed integration into the self's awareness because of the severe anxiety which is attached to the experience (1953b, p. 318). However, dissociated material continues to affect behavior. In fact, its power may be so great, its presence can overpower conscious decision-making and willed activity (1953a, pp. 27-28). When the not me is expressed in such a manner, an observer may notice the irrational quality of the person's behavior. However, the person herself may have no such awareness.

Panic, as the outer edge of terror, occurs when something which one trusted collapses. Panic is the sort of blind terror which does not lead to productive activity. "Panic leads to nothing. One is disorganized" (1953b, p. 327). Blind frantic activities occur which may be self-destructive. He comments that during panic the individual's structure of beliefs and convictions about the security and dependability of the universe is disorganized.



And the far side of these panicky instances may be anything from terror to great religious exaltation. In any case, the personality is partly torn from its moorings and has moved from what was actually its developmental level into a state which we call the schizophrenic way of life. (1953b, p. 327)

In other words, severe experiences of anxiety precipitate re-organization of the personality at the parataxic level of experience, that level of private, autistic arrangement of communication. Terror and panic, arising from an activated fear of death, precipitate reorganization at the prototaxic level. However the individual organizes the results of the anxiety or terror arousing experience, Sullivan believes she will mount extensive security operations to prevent awareness of the experience from re-entering consciousness. It remains in the pre-consensually validated areas of understood experience.

During normal sleep, the personality relieves itself of the need to monitor awareness constantly. In order to sleep, the individual needs to feel relatively secure in a situation more or less free of dangers. When anxiety is severe, sleep is practically impossible until one can no longer fight it off. In these situations, sleep is cut into very short periods of very deep sleep and very long periods of light sleep.

During the latter the person maintains some awareness of surroundings. In light sleep, the individual can and does maintain some security functions.

Sullivan claims that humans, with dissociated experiences accompanied by severe anxiety, maintain alertness to the dissociated material, continuing, even during sleep, to guard it from awareness. He writes:

The more of personality which exists in dissociation, the less restful and more troubled will be the person's simple function of the extent to which the activity of the self-system can be abandoned for a certain part of the twenty four hours; and when powerful motivational systems are dissociated, it is impossible to abandon enough of the self-system function so that one can have deep and restful sleep. (1953b, p. 331)

However, eternal vigilance is impossible. By means of the nightmare, dissociated material threatens to return. What can be kept out of waking awareness unsettles sleep and reminds the person of its presence with uncanny dread and horror. Sullivan claims many nightmares cannot be easily recalled upon awaking. All that remains is the memory of night terror. In dreams, the prototaxic or parataxic preverbal nature of human experience attempts to assert itself in symbolic form.

In addition to dissociation and nightmares, the personality utilizes selective inattention, ritual avoidance and internal restrictions in living to avoid encountering situations which would dislodge the presence of anxiety into conscious awareness.

What is necessary to adjust to the uncanny demands of anxiety is to accept its presence and project the total personality into the statement, "Well, this is it; for good or evil, for better or worse, it is so" (1953b, p. 325). Even though one feels as if one cannot survive the knowing nor analyze the distress, the acceptance of something that needs to be survived (or perhaps not survived) is what Sullivan means by acceptance of the uncanny (1953b, p. 325).

In his 1954 book, Sullivan elaborates that humans wish to avoid all anxiety and will do so by paying any costs. (Parenthetically, fear is another matter for Sullivan. Humans seek the thrill of fear. Witness the roller coaster ride.) Experience of the emotion of anxiety, like the experience of loneliness, is unbearable and is, therefore, attended to by many security operations. Security operations function as an early warning system that anxiety is approaching.

The transformation of anxiety into anger is one of the most used ways to avoid encountering one's own anxiety. He claims that "anger is much more pleasant to experience than anxiety" (1954, p. 109). A feeling of power goes with anger; anger tends to drive things away, therefore, allowing avoidance of anxiety. However, without vigilance, anxiety always threatens to return.

Individuals who have a strong not me component to their personalities, have "been subjected to such intense anxiety, and anxiety so suddenly precipitated, that it was impossible for the . . . person to make any sense of, to develop any true grasp on, the particular circumstances which dictated the experience of this intense anxiety" (1953b. p. 314). The person who experiences such intense anxiety experiences it as uncanny (p. 315). Only under exceptional circumstances do people become aware of the part of one's life experience which enters the not me part of the personality (p. 316). Therapy is one opportunity for this awareness to happen.

Sullivan describes the response of the self-system to anxiety. Once anxiety has entered the realm of the not me, the self-system organizes itself around efforts to prevent any possibility of "passing into that extremely unpleasant state of living which can be called uncanny emotions" (1953b, p. 317). Except in disastrous situations, the presence of the uncanny can only be inferred. Nightmares are one clue to the presence of anxiety within the self-system. Dreams and nightmares represent parataxic operations "for the relief of insoluble problems of living" (1953b, p. 343).

Sullivan used his work with schizophrenics to study how people make sense of their experience. (Will, 1954, p. xiii). He was deeply interested in the interplay of individuals with the social forces of their lives and relationships. As part of the social field of Western cultures, he identified five issues which interfere in healing maneuvers. These five issues are: (1) people are taught that they should be ashamed of needing help to manage their lives; (2) people are taught that they should know themselves, others, an abstraction known as human nature, as well as what is right and wrong. As a result of all this knowing, they should be able to see through other's motivations; (3) people are taught that they should be ashamed if they cannot rise above the limitations of their past and its misfortunes; (4) people are taught they should have good intuitions, common sense, and be governed by reason and logic; and (5) people are taught that they should be independent and have no need of others (Sullivan, 1954, pp. 37-38).

Sullivan was convinced that these "cultural handicaps" affected the ability of psychiatrists to be helpful to patients. Nevertheless, he was optimistic about the possibility of intervening helpfully in the

lives of schizophrenics, individuals he believed to have been wounded early in life by overwhelming anxiety.

As a psychiatrist, his case studies reported treatment failures as well as successes. It is, therefore, a credible likelihood that his reported successes in returning schizophrenics to life outside the hospital setting were genuine ones. He did not seek quick cures. Rather, he chose to pace therapy to the amount of anxiety that the psychotic man could tolerate. He saw the therapeutic process as one in which the therapist managed her or his own countertransference anxiety so that the relationship with the patient could stay focused in the patient's experiences of life. The purpose of therapy, in his view, "is the understanding of living to the end that it may be facilitated" (1953a, p. 175). The responsible therapist understands that therapy involves a gradual evolution of awareness by both people involved, the client and the therapist (1953a, p. 183).

Sullivan attempted to understand the patient's communicative system so that he could enter into metaphors of the patient's reality with skill and helpfulness. He taught that the therapist who wishes to enter into an anxious person's world, must understand that anxiety is interpersonally transmitted

by empathy. Awareness of empathic processes serves the therapist well. Once aware, the therapist can use her own inner anxiety as a clue to the anxiety of the other.

Students in Sullivanian training programs are taught to differentiate between their own anxiety and that of clients. If during an encounter with a client, they experience intense anxiety, students are taught to leave the situation. If anxiety decreases immediately, the therapist has picked up the patient's emerging anxiety by empathic processes. If, however, anxiety remains, the student is taught that it is her own personal cache of anxiety which was threatening to break through.

The therapist, according to Sullivan, must be an expert in handling interpersonal relationships. She must be able to manage anxiety in her client and in herself. Without adequate self-knowledge, the therapist will

communicate to their interviewees a distaste for certain types of data; and their records are conspicuous for the fact that the people they see don't seem to have lived in the particular areas contaminated by that distaste. Until such interviewers realize that they are unwittingly prohibiting, or forbidding, or shooing the interviewee away from a particular type of data, they continue not to encounter it. (Sullivan, 1954, p. 70)

Therapists who manage their own anxiety appropriately are freed to pay attention to the nuances of communication, those tell-tale aspects which reveal anxiety even when the spoken word does not. These nuances include intonation, rate of speech, difficulty in enunciation, slips of the tongue, etc. These are the factors which convey meaning; these are things which work as signs (1954, p. 5). Only when the therapist handles her own anxiety well enough to interpret these signs by processes of consensual validation, can the therapist truly see the patient "acting-in-terms-of-his-past-and-including-me-also" (1954, p. xxi). This involves learning to hear data, relationships, and data not present (1954, p. 69).

Sullivan theorizes that individuals have conscious access to their own experiences only as these have been communicated in words, either in deliberately formulated thoughts or in spoken language. Many, perhaps most components of experience, are unformulated and, therefore, of a nonverbal or autistic nature (1953a, p. 185). With unformulated experience, individuals do not have ready recall of their experiences. When, in addition, the material is threatening, the personality works actively to keep the material pre-verbal and non-available to conscious deliberation.



It is essential for the therapist to demonstrate respect for the self-worth of the other person. To do this she needs awareness of the other person's feeling of security (1954, p. 31). To this end, the therapist will pay attention to all details of verbal and nonverbal communication.

With low levels of anxiety, the therapist will reassure or provide information; with high anxiety levels, the therapist will assist the client to regain comfort and, if necessary, come to the client's rescue. When the therapist knows that an intervention will create or elicit anxiety, the therapist will signal by a "little preliminary movement that he [sic] knows the unpleasantness that will attend this question" (1954, p. 31) but that it is necessary. This preliminary movement warns the client to "brace himself" (1954, p. 31).

In other words, Sullivan believed that in situations of high anxiety, healing is achieved by means of a relationship. In that relationship, the healer is responsible to monitor and manage anxiety in both herself and in the client. That responsibility entails a detailed awareness of the signification systems of the client. Sense-making by consensual validation occurs during an interpersonal process. Both persons become engaged in seeking consensual

validation of the client's experiences. During this search, terrors and anxieties of the prehended experience are transformed from preverbal ones into perceptible, communicable ones.

This transformation happens as the client formulates vague, non-discrete experiences into communicable information. Once clearly communicated, the client and the therapist can mutually discuss the now available experience. A process of consensual validation begins in which therapist and client share information and meanings about the client's experiences. The goal of therapy is syntactic experience (experience which can be communicated and validated). As the client and therapist identify and resolve non-syntactic experience, the client's self expands. She is able to dissolve the negative impacts of the now-expressed experience (1953a, pp. 236-238).

Sullivan emphatically believed, "No one has grave difficulties in living if he [sic] has a very good grasp on what is happening to him [sic]" (1954, p. 24). When one remembers that his work with severely handicapped schizophrenics took place in institutional settings before the advent of tranquilizers, his optimism about patient healing is formidable.

## Note

## Chapter 8

\*See J. Achterberg's (1985) description of using a recorded in utero heart beat to soothe infants with severe burns. The heart sounds could induce sleep for the infants even during painful dressing changes (p. 43).

## Chapter 9

### Women's Psychic Dismemberment

With which voice shall I speak to you. After rape there is a terrible silence. Then, if one is fortunate, one begins to learn to speak again. Why is the silence so terrible and so profound? What is the meaning of the crime that has been acted out? Why are its effects so dire?

Deena Metzger

It is Always the Woman Who Gets Raped

### Introduction

With the words quoted above, D. Metzger (1976) opens her discussion of the epistemology of women's knowing after rape. One way of knowing is by means of the intellect; the other is by way of experience. She asks how she shall communicate to her readers about her experience of rape?

Metzger understands rape as a culturally sanctioned event and reminds us that Rubens' painting of the Rape of the Sabine Women is high art. "Yet the painting . . . is informed by the same values that produce street rape" (p. 405). In both the crime and the painting, values are symbolically represented and enacted. Those values include social control of the woman and a definition of her as a nonperson (p. 405).

For Metzger, rape functions as an extreme form of social regulation. The rapist's role in rape is to translate cultural thoughts about women into action. Like the church and the state, he is asserting his male rights over her (p. 406). In his use of her, the rapist strips the woman of her humanity. She becomes confronted with his definition of her as nonperson. In rape, he depersonalizes and objectifies her. Not an eccentric, but an extremist, the rapist enters the woman and uses her to assert the cultural value that her sexuality is not egalitarian but subordinate.

The woman, after rape, asks: "Do I have a life?" (p. 406) Metzger asserts that the woman who has experienced rape in her life becomes nothing; the rapist has forced "the identity of nonperson indelibly upon her" (p. 407).

Describing post-rape intercourse with her husband as analogous to getting on a bike immediately after falling (if I did not immediately remount the bike, I might never be courageous enough to ride again), she comments, "Intercourse was easy. It didn't matter. I was an abandoned house. Vacated. Anyone or anything could enter" (p. 406). Within a year, she and her husband began divorce procedures.

Metzger continues, "the raped woman often cannot bear to be touched; touched, she knows she cannot feel;

touched, she remains untouched. She is incarcerated in Hades. Her mother is outside and cannot hear her" (p. 406).

Like the patriarchal myth of abducted Persephone, separated in the underworld from her mother Demeter, the raped woman is alone and empty.\* She is isolated from anyone and anything that can help or comfort her (p. 406). In her isolation, she enters psychic quarantine where she exists as if she were contaminated, diseased, deformed or scarred (p. 407).

The woman becomes Nonbeing. As Nonbeing she is known now by her rapist without knowing herself; raped, she cannot gain the identity which comes from self-knowledge (pp. 407). Metzger first worked through some aspects of her rape in a series of unpublished novels. Of her decision to write publicly in the first person about her rape, she explains:

I decided to make this public in order to break some of the silence and isolation which reinforces the personlessness of women. The private voice in the public sphere confirms our common experience through which we begin to assert ourselves. Unlike my [second] character, now, I can. (1976, p. 408)

In rereading Metzger's words, I am struck by how they parallel the language used by Sullivan to describe schizophrenic anxiety in men. A sudden rape event at gunpoint led to Metzger's feelings of isolation and

madness. In its aftermath she experienced herself as nothing, as Nonbeing. As she recovered, she returned to self-assertion and speech.

While anxiety theory probably cannot and should not function as the only explanation for women's slow recovery from rape, I believe that it can assist the listening helper to understand some of the issues related to women's recovery. A woman who is raped may or may not experience a psychotic like reaction to her experience. It is clear from our review of literature about women's recovery after rape, however, that she will experience severe stress and anxiety. This anxiety begins during the rape itself as she attempts to survive. Much of the literature review suggests that the more difficult part of her coping with anxiety will be after the rape, when she has, in fact, survived.

#### Women's Responses to the Terror of Rape

Rape events are perceived by women as carrying a death threat. If Sullivan is correct, threats to biological survival elicit primitive, rage-like behaviors. These occur in the prototaxic mode of experience. Preverbal in nature, prototaxic responses

represent nondifferentiated experience. During rape, it is likely that the prototaxic mode of experience operates simultaneously with parataxic and syntaxic modes of experience. Life threat material is likely dealt with in the prototaxic mode, while rape threat material is likely dealt with in the parataxic and syntaxic mode.

Sullivan (1953b) describes crying as a preverbal request for tenderness. It is quite possible that crying during rape reflects a request (rooted in both prototaxic and parataxic experience) made of the rapist by the woman that he do the paradoxical; comfort her while attacking her. As a "rescue me" response to the threat of rape, crying is singularly non-useful to the woman in the moment of rape (Bart and O'Brien, 1985).

If, as Sullivan suggests, a preverbal response to life-threatening danger resembles rage, the woman's crying before, during and after rape may also be an attempt to handle rage at her violation. Inasmuch as direct expressions of rage are often a culturally forbidden language to women in the presence of men, crying may discharge the energy of rage without needing to demonstrate directly its presence. In addition, crying may be safer than other demonstrations of rage. Contained within a situation of male aggression and domination directed against her, open expressions of



rage during rape may be singularly dangerous for the woman. She could trigger much more violent behavior from the man.

Although ineffective in changing the rapist's behavior, crying may allow her to cope in such a way that she survives with less damage to the self-system. If crying functions to decrease the free-floating energy of her anxiety, its release of that energy may allow her to dissociate less of her experience. If she dissociates less of the experience, the event of rape remains more available to her for conscious processing. This may be at least part of the explanation for the longer recovery period for women who appear controlled and self-sustained during rape and its immediate aftermath (Krulewitz, 1982).

A woman's dilemma during the rape itself is that she does not know what will work to protect her. Unable to validate her situation with the rapist in any consensual way, terror likely triggers prototaxic modes of experience. Yet the woman must continue to respond in some manner or another to her rapist. She must make decisions out of her own perceptions of reality. Those perceptions are contaminated by her experience of severe anxiety or panic. If in panic, her total self disorganizes and her activity is blind and perhaps even self-destructive (Sullivan, 1953b, p. 327). Isolated

from others, she must handle the interpersonal transaction of rape by herself. Cooperating with her rapist, she will get raped; non-cooperating with her rapist, she may be mutilated or killed in addition to being raped. Unable to escape her rapist, she uses whatever behavior she can mobilize to ameliorate her situation and reduce her terror.

Many women report that during the rape they observed themselves responding to the rapist's demands. Physically experiencing the rape, these women report having spontaneous out-of-body experiences. They become spectators, watching the rape from across the room or from the ceiling, as well as participants in the total rape experience. Other women more or less deliberately split cognition away from awareness of what is happening to the body in order to control a rising sense of panic. J. Katz (1984), for example, reports deliberately splitting her thinking process away from her body's experiences; she purposefully dissociated her body from her mind (pp. 4-5). She directed her focal awareness to making decisions about what she would do as soon as the rapist left. Her body, in the present moment, was being raped; her sensory awareness was of that rape. However, her cognitive focus was in the future; she was planning her post-rape actions.

Recalling Sullivan's description of a blow on the head (1953b, p. 314), helps us to understand the aftermath of such splitting. Suddenly precipitated, intense anxiety causes splitting of the self into the preverbal parataxic mode of experience. As a part of that splitting, the individual thrusts off experience memories into the not me. Once the dissociated material becomes part of the not me, the personality erects barriers to awareness. To this are attached the uncanny emotions of horror, terror or panic. All of this material becomes non-accessible to consciousness as the personality seeks to avoid re-encountering any anxiety or panic associated with conscious recall of the rape and the splitting. M. Bard and D. Sangrey (1980) observe that immediately after rape, victims are confused, have trouble thinking clearly, have difficulty recalling details of the crime, and are unable to talk coherently; this also supports Sullivan's theory.

The not me is the repository of material split off from awareness. D. Rose (Braude, Rose, & Lehrman, 1987) describes her difficulty in knowing about dissociated materials in clients. She contrasts simple repression of anxiety with dissociation. Repressed psychic material triggers helpful fantasies in the therapist of issues needing to be addressed. The

presence of dissociated anxiety is experienced as a void, as not there. No helpful fantasies or intuitions guide the therapist to intuit the presence of this material. Often therapy has proceeded for several months before the therapist is aware of a void in the client's story of rape. A void (Rose) and a vacated, abandoned space (Metzger), while not precisely the same verbal image, convey some similar linguistic metaphors. Emptiness, isolation, abandonedness, desertedness, and nothingness are some that readily come to mind.

If Sullivan is correct in his understanding of the dynamics of dissociation, it becomes possible to understand the dynamics of Rose's experience with survivors who do not connect affect and story, even in an ongoing therapeutic relationship. The therapist is not dealing with simple repression of unacceptable material into the unconscious aspect of the self. Rather, the material has been segmented or dismembered and isolated from consciousness as part of the not me.

In another set of conceptual understandings about anxiety's operational processes, Sullivan's work may also be informative. In his work on empathic transmission and reception of emotional states, he comments that anxiety is interpersonally transmitted.

In the parataxic mode of knowing, the helpless person experiences, as her own, the emotional state of the person who is in authority.

In other words, anxiety in the infant's care-giver is transmitted to the infant who becomes anxious in turn. Since the infant cannot choose to escape the field of anxiety lodged within the other person, much of the infant's introjection of that anxiety gets expressed in anxious behaviors such as spitting up after feeding, crying without stopping, retreating into sleep, or, in severe cases, apathy.

Rose's comments from her psychiatric practice with rape survivors, that women intuit the rapist's murderous rage. It is possible that they pick up any traces of anxiety as well. For Sullivan, the transmission and reception of anxiety by one person and its reception by another are preverbal and automatic processes. The receiver knows of the transmitter's anxiety because she feels anxious herself. If the receiver is able to leave the situation, her anxiety will immediately decrease. Unable to leave, her anxiety intensifies.

By its nature as an interpersonally transacted event, rape functions as a multi-channel event for the woman. All of the channels described by Sullivan are open. Rape is visual, auditory, sensory, kinesthetic,

etc. By channel openness she is searching the rape field for information about the extent of her danger. I speculate that this openness exists because the woman seeks a way, any way at all, to prevent the rapist from raping or killing her.

Rape is not only an external event which occurs in external proximity to the woman's body-space; it is an event in which her body-space is invaded. Mucous membranes are much more permeable than skin in allowing a ready transfer of sensations. The mouth, the anus, and the vagina all are membrane lined inner spaces where the hostile intruder can enter her body and merge, even momentarily, with it. I speculate that physical merger in rape functions much like the physical merger of nipple and mouth during nursing activities. In Sullivan's theory of anxiety transfer maternal anxiety is especially transmitted during nursing activities (1953b, pp. 49-109). The proximal closeness of both bodies in an anxiety laden relationship activates the empathic transmitter-receptor process. However that process of anxiety transfer really functions, its presence during rape contributes to the woman's terror.

A consequence of this channel openness, however necessary it may be, is that she absorbs much of the rapist's emotional state as her own. Rose's

comments that the woman intuitively feels the murderous rage of the rapist and Sullivan's (1953b) comments that severe anxiety is always interpersonally transmitted, appear to support some form of preverbal transfer of intense emotional states. When these empathic transmitter-receptor channels are open, the rapist's rage and anxiety may be readily transmitted to the woman. If this outside-of-herself-anxiety is dissociated along with her own anxiety about rape, much of it could remain totally unavailable to her for later processing. She may carry, as if they were her own, the anxiety and rage which originated in her rapist.

During rape, the woman's field of freedom is severely limited. Her attention, focused on survival, leads her to attempt self-protection in whatever ways she can. Yet she may begin to blame herself for her self-protecting actions during the rape, as well as after it. Katz, for example, describes her rapist as a man who had difficulty in getting an erection, a not uncommon phenomenon among rapists. She writes about her growing anxiety:

At this point I just wanted him to get it over with and to leave me alone. I feared that he would require me to become an active participant. My terror increased as each moment passed. Fearing he would get violent if he could not reach his goal, I put my hand on his shoulder and told him that he was okay. It was the reassurance he needed. I then hated myself for encouraging him. (1984, p. 5)

Women, afraid for their survival, often are forced into complicitous actions with the men who rape them. Rapists may insist that the woman say she is enjoying her rape, that she loves him, or that she wants to be treated roughly. How much the woman introjects these enforced messages into her own perception of the rape is unclear.

It is likely, however, that a second source of anxiety probably lies in cultural socialization of women to compliance and non-aggression. In a dangerous system of forced compliance, what they have previously learned about voluntary compliance to please men now fails them. Instead, they are victimized. This failure of previously learned expectations reminds us of R. Janoff-Bulman's and I. H. Frieze's (1983) work on the shattering of assumptions during rape.

Katz's rapist does not thank her for her reassurance about his erectile dysfunction; instead he rapes her. Women's socialized civility and non-aggressiveness, like women's crying, does not free them from the field of rape. In rape they confront their culture's messages about a woman's place in a man's world. Their sense of betrayal is great. While the rapist has assaulted them, they intuit that their own socialization into femininity has probably betrayed them also.



After rape some women express the determination that they will never be raped again. When asked about the meaning of that assertion in day to day living, they report new assertiveness in responding to men's sexual aggressiveness at work, in school, on the streets, or in personal relationships. They may even assert that these "day to day rapes" are no longer tolerable to them at all.

Katz (1984) describes a television interviewer who hosted a public information show. Years after her rape, she was asked to do a public information call-in about rape on his show. In the immediate pre-broadcast period, he joked about rape, saying he had told his daughters, if threatened, to lie back and enjoy it. Katz was enraged. As she sat down beside him to begin the call-in interview, she grabbed his arm and said, "I am a rape victim and I don't feel that rape is a laughing matter. If you make a joke about it on the air, I'll nail you" (p. 72). She comments that he was very serious during the on-air time and made no additional inappropriate comments.

The discharge of previously restricted kinesthetic energy may be very important after a rape inasmuch as rape involves a direct physical assault on the surface of the woman's body as well as within its internal spaces. Her self-chosen movement is often restricted

during or after the rape. For example, the woman may be tied in some manner to limit any struggle. Sometimes she is gagged or taped so she cannot assert herself verbally.

I think it is here where we reach a boundary limit of Sullivan's approach. In his primarily cognitive and verbal approach to understanding recovery from not me experiences, he forgets his own wisdom. In his theory of preverbal not me experiences, it is the body's experiences which predominate because the infant does not yet have language. If the body-self encodes experience into dissociated material, it can also re-encode its re-emergence into consciousness. Many bodily sensations exist within pre-awareness in a non-encoded manner. When necessary, they can usually be en-coded, drawn into awareness, and adequately, if not perfectly, be described.

B. Medicine Eagle (1988) approaches healing from the vantage point of American Indian beliefs about unity and wholeness of the body-spirit-self. Understanding of human experiences, according to Medicine Eagle, doesn't happen only with language. The body, in all of its sensing, also has knowledge and wisdom. Because of the stored memories of the body, understanding and healing can occur by means of "healing metaphors in action" (1988).

By applying Medicine Eagle's teachings about enacted metaphors alongside of Sullivan's teachings about anxiety, it becomes possible to construct an alternative route around roadblocks to dissociated materials. Healing body-work can utilize the body's stored memory as a way to circumvent linguistic blocks to recall. What the mind censors and guards is the forbidden exit of anxiety causing memories which have been dissociated. However, by enlisting the body's kinesthetic action memories, the client may release into consciousness that which the mind has refused to release. For example, having a woman demonstrate the posture in which she was raped may re-surface her high anxiety along with a flood of long-dissociated memories. Obviously, the therapist should never initiate such a maneuver without careful preparation of the client and without sufficient time for listening to the suffering which is re-experienced. Sullivan's wisdom about the wish in humans to avoid anxiety is sound. His admonition to warn the client about anxiety eliciting therapeutic efforts is essential. Unbinding the anxiety of dissociated material must be titrated into tolerable amounts. Otherwise, the therapist participates in a therapeutic second assault in which even more material may be dissociated. Medicine Eagle comments that well-designed and implemented action

metaphors may yield more transformation than talking, catharting, and being counseled (1988, p. 215). I believe both are needed.

Suitable body-work healing efforts can circumvent some of the mind's rigid control of anxiety. However, the client needs preparation, support, and extensive de-briefing. The woman may need physical support from the therapist as well. I have learned to offer to hold the woman's hand before engaging in any attempt at body-work. If she refuses my physical support, I proceed very cautiously. Once memory of the rape becomes integrated into consciousness along with its affect, the woman has greater choicefulness about what she needs to do with the remnants of her experience which are non-integrated into her ongoing life. She may become aware of crippling anxiety, crippling rage, crippling hatred, or other emotions still connected to the rape experience. As is often the case, freeing one set of memories may free others also.

I want to suggest also that each channel of prehension and perception may lead to the freeing of parataxically lost material. Attention should be paid to all of the metaphors used by the woman to describe her experience. Careful attention to the woman's physical metaphors may provide a better route to freeing the split off materials than a frontal, linear

approach. By paying careful attention to any stereotyped body language during anxious moments the woman's body may yield clues to the presence of memories stored in the woman's sensory channels. These can then be carefully explored as well. I have found that asking her to exaggerate the motion while attending closely to her perceived emotion and thought patterns often frees essential information to her. Previously repressed or dissociated materials frequently emerge into her conscious awareness.

In addition, awareness of primitive survival techniques may assist the woman to understand her immobile status during rape. S. D. Suarez and G. G. Gallup (1979) describe tonic immobility among animals when they perceive their life is threatened by a predator. In states of tonic immobility, the animal no longer needs to be physically restrained. With spontaneous recovery from this state of immobility, the animal is unusually aggressive and active. During its period of catatonic like behavior, these researchers believe the animal is alert, conscious, and watchful. It is simply unable to move.

Much of this description of tonic immobility in animals fits clinical descriptions of catatonic behavior in schizophrenia. Sometimes hospitalized catatonic persons have a spontaneous remission of their

illness. If asked, they are able to describe accurately and in minute detail all that they saw and heard while immobilized.

Much of this awareness of the biological organism's automatically triggered behavior during predatory threats to its life, is reminiscent of Sullivan's work on prototaxic responses to biological threats. If the woman's inability to move during rape and her subsequent rage after it are triggered by automatic processes in the prototaxic mode of experience, her access to that material in a conscious way is remote. Hindsight self-blaming by the woman may reflect an inadequate knowledge of her biological responses to anxiety. In fact, her biological self may have known what her conscious self did not perceive: struggling and aggressive, she may have been killed; immobile she was raped and survived.

M. Bard and D. Sangrey (1980) also describe women's fantasied revenge upon their rapists. These vengeful fantasies threaten their self-esteem. Some, rather than direct the anger towards external sources, turn the anger against themselves in suicidal behaviors.

If, as Sullivan hypothesizes, anger and rage are safer than severe anxiety, and if, as Suarez and Gallop hypothesize, rage after an averted predatory attack is

a biologically grounded reaction to the threat of her life; women's rage is functional in that it is a massive survival effort made by the body. Its sources are biological. The woman's rage can be seen as rooted within her responses as prey. With predatory activities her primitive survival instincts are activated.

However, in a culture which teaches women to avoid rage and anger because both are unladylike and threatening to men, the woman after rape is bound by contradictory impulses. Enraged, she is not a ladylike person; not consciously enraged, she must work to control these primitive reactions from consciousness and behavioral expression. In other words, the non-acceptable post-rape impulses of rage also must be dissociated.

In Rose's (1987) therapy practice with rape survivors, she reports that many women are not consciously aware of rage at the rapist. She states these women are so unaware of rage, and at times so immobilized by its unconscious presence in their post-rape experiences, that they may be unable to prosecute an offender even if he is arrested. They may even identify with their rapist's suffering if jailed. They express fears, which according to Rose also encode rage, that he may be raped in jail.

Among college students who have experienced acquaintance rape, I have found depression to be much more common than rage. J. Becker's et al., findings (1984b), as well as those of E. Frank and her associates (1979, 1984), indicate the presence of depression after rape as well.

This theoretical discussion of the woman's dissociation of rage urges caution in the counselor's attempts to express her own rage as a liberation model for the woman. This may again be a counter-therapeutic effort for some women. In the therapist's desire to express rage, several processes may be active. Anxiety may be in transmission from client to therapist as the client describes her rape. The therapist, unable to deal with her own experience of anxiety, may transmute anxiety into anger. However, expressing that anger directly, without self-awareness and deliberate choicefulness, may reinforce the client's terror and silent dissociated rage. The client may also serve as a conductor of the rapist's murderous rage and activate the therapist's anxiety about this aspect of the client's experience as well. When reflected back to the client by the therapist, the client may feel misunderstood and assaulted a second time.

I do not mean to suggest that it is always counter-therapeutic to model the ability to discuss



rage's presence with descriptions of rape. However, I do believe this ought not to become a standardized, automatic approach to each woman. The therapist should move very cautiously in assessing the helpfulness of expressed rage to each woman.

In a poem written after her rape, J. Ragir (1985) may be describing some of this internal conflict. Initially the poem describes her actions after an event of stranger rape; she pounded the sofa, kicked her legs as a mad child, and turned her hands into knives which stab the rapist (p. 191). Commenting that it is not ladylike to pound and pound, she writes, "I am not a compliant little girl. I am a screaming redhead with demonic eyes and Knives coming out of my hands and muscles bulging out my arms who pounds and pounds him until his death" (p. 192). Later in the poem she comments, "[I did not know then] that my Anger would kill him, pounding and stabbing my empty couch at midnight (P. 195)." Such private expressions of rage are certainly part of the healing process. However, Ragir's rage erupted in her own home. Her words remind us that many victims do their healing work privately (Taylor, Wood, and Lichtman, 1983).

In assisting women clients to recognize, acknowledge and integrate awareness of rage after rape into their self-healing, it may be helpful to explore

with them the survival value of tonic immobility (Suarez and Gallup, 1979). I have taught this material in a class of undergraduates. One older woman student remarked to me much later that this information had been very helpful to her in understanding her own total immobility during stranger rape.

In another form of dissociation, Rose (1987) describes rape reenactment as a defense against anxiety. By means of re-enactment behaviors the woman's life becomes a continuous re-play of the initial violation. By means of symbolic activity, she attempts to handle the dissociated material. Symbolic actions include behaviors such as putting herself in previously unknown and dangerous situations. An example would be beginning to work as a prostitute. Rose speculates she is attempting, in some manner, to regain self-control. Symbolic activities also include treating others in ways which replicate the exploitation. In one form of replication acting out, the woman enacts the role of the aggressor. Rose describes a woman who was robbed and raped. That woman, in turn, did not pay her therapist. In essence, the client robbed her therapist. Re-enactment also involves proneness to second or multiple events of re-victimization.

Rose speculates that the woman who had to be passive in her self-defense during the rape, becomes active in acting out dissociated materials in self-other destruction. The literature review of demographic statistics clearly documents increased vulnerability to rape or other forms of sexual violence; women who have been violated by any form of sexual assault are more prone to second and third assaults. Childhood incest may predispose women to adult rape; episodes of adult rape may predispose women to battering; date battering may predispose women to spouse rape.

It is absolutely essential for the therapist to avoid blaming the victim for her suffering in any way. When I teach undergraduate students about date rape, I tell them women should be able to walk naked down a dark alley at midnight and not be raped. While, in our culture, this behavior certainly would signal the need for help, it need not be seen as a desire for rape. If raped in the particular scenario I have described, the rapist is still responsible for his decision to violate her rather than to help her find safety and help. Responsibility for rape lies with the rapist. It does not lie with the victim.

Yet, this phenomenon of re-enactment among rape victims is very troublesome for therapists and for

victims. I have heard women survivors plead for information as to how the second violation could have happened to them. My experience with women is that they search endlessly in their own psychic experience and behaviors for a clue. My experience with therapists is that the language which we use to describe this phenomenon is often very close to victim blaming. Therapists discuss the second rape in terms of the victim's vulnerability to rape. Among therapists, it is common to hear comments such as, "I don't understand why so many women who were raped or violated in childhood are raped a second time. It's as if they are signalling their vulnerability in some way. There must be some way they give away their powers of self-protection."

I think the process of dissociation may be part of the clue. That which is dissociated remains dismembered and continues its wounding of the woman. In the animal world, predators most often identify the weakest animal for prey activity. That may remain true in the human world as well. Wounded and dismembered, the woman cannot use whatever power-of-self-protection she has to shield herself from male sexual predation. Even though consciously she works very hard to protect her body-self, her inner-self is dismembered and works

against her. A split, dismembered self cannot function with empowered self-protectiveness in a culture which sanctions massive predation against women.

In conclusion, I believe the presence of a cultural context of sexual violence creates a certain level of anxiety about rape in all women. When women experience enacted rape, that anxiety escalates into near-panic proportions. That so many women remain able to think their way through a rape to survival is a source of strength to women. We need to learn much more from women who have survived rape about the sources of their strength and resistance.

The apparently universal nature of post-rape anxiety can be examined by use of anxiety theory. Inasmuch as women who tell their own stories of rape report several years of self-healing recovery work, crisis theory is an inadequate model for helping women. Once six or eight weeks have elapsed since the rape event has occurred, the woman is experiencing long-term efforts at coping. Whether or not she has the help of others, she will encounter and re-encounter anxiety. Assisting women to understand the nature of their long term anxiety experiences after rape may help them to make sense of their post-rape world with more dispatch.

In even this cursory look at anxiety theory, it has become clear that it provides a conceptual

framework for further exploration. If women can identify ways to handle anxiety during and after rape which do not further dismember the self, recovery from rape may become less traumatic. In addition, a good understanding of the role of anxiety in controlling behavior begins to undercut much of the victim blaming which has gone on. For example, if tonic immobility is a reality in self-protection, then the frequently stated opinion, "She didn't fight back, she must have enjoyed it," can be countered by information from studies of predatory activities and prey response to those activities.

Further analysis of anxiety theory, this time through women's experience of post-rape anxiety, appears warranted. I believe women can begin to transform women's post-rape trauma. To do so, we must continue to explore the multiple dimensions of that trauma in order to understand them better and to assist more reliably the woman who has lived through rape and survived.

## Note

## Chapter 9

\*While Charlene Spretnak presents a feminist explication of this myth in her chapter, *The Myth of Demeter and Persephone* (J. Plaskow and C. Christ, [1989], Weaving the Visions, pp. 72-76), San Francisco: Harper & Row.), its usual telling is of Persephone's abduction to the underworld where she becomes the unwilling bride of Hades. Metzger is using its traditional form to explain her own experiences.

Chapter 10  
The Authority of Rape

Our conditioning to obey authority is the foundation of the culture of domination. It is embedded in us so deeply that we are rarely aware of it.

Starhawk  
Truth or Dare

Introduction

Within patriarchal culture, rape serves as a powerful reminder to all women of men's willingness and ability to control women. Reflecting cultural myths which teach women and men that women are inferior, the cultural form of rape conveys multiple levels of meaning. In events of rape, the woman encounters these multiple levels of meaning. Some are evidenced during the rape itself. Others become evident to the woman after rape as she seeks to heal her wounds.

We have seen that an initial response of women during rape is that of terror. Afraid that the rapist will kill them, they involuntarily enter into an interpersonal transaction without knowing if they will be able to influence its outcome in any meaningful way.



In rape, women learn that they are powerless to protect their body-selves from the rapist's physical assault. He enters their bodies, claiming them as his own. They learn that he insists upon their compliance to his demands as agents of his will rather than as agents of their own.

Rape operationally expresses a man's power over the woman. Once a woman understands that she is not going to escape from the field of rape, she begins the process of dealing with herself as a woman-who-is-victim. Perceiving herself as powerless to do more than attempt survival, the woman reacts to rape as a total body-self. She searches for her own route out of a dangerous interpersonal transaction. Often that route involves obedience behaviors. Powerless to stop her rape, the woman seeks to protect her life by compliance. She does whatever she is commanded to do by her rapist in the hope that she will not inadvertently trigger him into mutilating or killing her.

A central dynamic of rape is the rapist's demand that the woman accept a powerless position in which she obeys him. The rapist defines the field of his interaction with the woman as one in which he holds all of the power. Only he establishes the rules of their relationship. His authority over the woman is

absolute. No amount of prayer-like pleading from the woman will dissuade him from his work. Like a god, he creates and he destroys without explanation. It is sufficient for him that the woman know that he is in control of their shared history and that she is not. He claims for himself all the power and authority. From her, he demands total compliance, total obedience. Establishing himself as her omnipotent ruler, upon whom she is totally dependent for life, he enacts his power through her weakness. He uses her body-self as if it belonged to him. She becomes his personal, conquered property.

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, the woman remains bound to her rapist by the terror which he caused her. The current chapter claims it is not only the terror of rape which binds the woman to her rapist; she is bound also by the absoluteness of his demand for her obedience.

#### Obedience: A Cultural Form of Mind Colonization

Starhawk, in her most recent book (1987), writes about patriarchal systems of domination and their colonization of the minds of the powerless. Starhawk's study of authority and obedience is not a study of rape. It originated in self-other observations made

during civil disobedience efforts. In this study of power and authority, Starhawk focuses on the jail which colonizes women's minds after they have once been jailed. She claims that once jailed and released, women must learn to recognize the jail which has now been implanted in their own minds (p. 77).

Starhawk claims that long before the implantation of the jail in their minds, culture has socially conditioned women to obey systems of authority. While men are socially conditioned by culture to their status as lord; women are conditioned to their status as servants. Any given woman's status is partially derivative. Her specific position as a servant to her lord is modified by the social position of the man or men to whom she is attached as wife, daughter, lover or slave (p. 201). A woman who serves a high status man, as wife, may also enslave lower status women and men as slaves. Yet, in her primary identity as the Master's wife, her primary status is servant. As a servant, she is dependent upon the man for her sustenance and economic security. Of the woman's relationship to her Master, Starhawk writes:

The unspoken promise of the Master is that we will be taken care of. . . . Serve a man, and he will take care of you. You will not have to take care of yourself. The threat, the counterpart to the promise, is that if we fail to play our proper roles, we will not be cared for, and will be unable to care for ourselves. (p. 202)

Describing cultural values of authority and power directed against the woman's self to ensure her obedience, Starhawk identifies a two-armed clamp: one arm is made up of threats of something worse if she disobeys; the second is made up of promises if she obeys (p. 72). In situations of authoritarian coercion, the victim is controlled between the two arms of the clamp.

Patriarchal systems of control inflict pain and damage; restrict action and movement; withhold necessary survival resources; humiliate; and erode the self's sense of self-worth (p. 74). Controlled by rules of the situation in which she is embedded, the victim experiences the system's situational definition of reality as her own. In situations of coercive violence, victims believe what the authority insists is interactionally real because there is no way of telling what is real (p. 79). The rules of the situation, defined by the victimizer, become reality for the victim who must follow them (pp. 79-80).

I want to extend Starhawk's theory to include the assertion that rape colonizes women's minds in addition to their bodies. Women, dominated by a rapist's demands for obedience in a violent situation, believe their survival is dependent upon their acts of compliance with his demands and definitions of their

relationship. Whether or not the rapist has a weapon, for example, women believe his threats of further violence. The rapist creates the interactional frame of their relationship. To avoid worse realities, women enter into his frame and comply with his demands.

Even when essential for survival, such compliance behaviors, however, carry the risk of psychic internalization. Enforced obedience, created by fear, possesses the woman. One of the resultant dangers of such possession, according to Starhawk, is the creation of an internalized acceptance of the rules and structures of obedience. The end result of this internalized acceptance is colonization of the woman's mind (p. 75). Once made physically obedient during situations of coercion, the woman now becomes psychologically obedient by virtue of the rules and structures which she has internalized. For example, the rapist may say, "Do not call the police. If you do, I will return and kill you." Many women in this situation do not report the rape to anyone.

Once raped, the rape event has colonized the woman's mind. Rape is now in her mind as it once was in her physical body. The overriding message of rape is that men are to be obeyed. The cultural faith of rape is men's authority over women. In this respect, rape shares the cultural faith of patriarchal

Christianity, pornography and classical psychoanalysis. As we have seen in section two, these systems of ideas teach woman about her necessary subordination to men's authority and wishes. While not in the scope of this dissertation to answer, the question arises as to whether all three of these cultural stories need the rape of women to survive as patriarchal, power-filled social myths.

The cultural context of rape and the event of rape, in at least one respect, share a faith belief. The woman exists for the man. Their shared embodiment as physical bodies is not egalitarian but hierarchical. The woman and the man, biologically sexual in human nature, differ in morphological structures of their sexuality. Rape stresses the difference of these two forms of human sexuality, the male and the female, and creates a typology of dominance. By the man's use of his own body and its sexual structures, the penis becomes a weapon he can use against the woman's body-self. By means of his sexuality, he expresses his culture's contempt of the woman. He uses his biological difference from her to assault her. By his action of rape, he dehumanizes her. He behaviorally enacts cultural beliefs that she is a lesser human than he. As a man with a penis, he has rights to her body. She is not allowed to deny him access to her body.

Rape not only teaches women to fear men's violence; it also teaches them to acknowledge men's power to command obedience. The rapist does not only claim her body; he also claims her psyche, her mind, and her will as well.

The binding power of the rapist's demands for obedience are evident in the woman's reactions after rape. She does not easily confront and resolve her anxious memories of the rapist's bodily assault. It is apparently also difficult for her to resolve memories of her own compliance behaviors. Women, from a post-rape hindsight position, repeatedly make self-judging comments about their own responses during a rape (Janoff-Bulman, 1979; 1982; Janoff-Bulman and Frieze, 1983; Katz, 1984).

As I have reflected upon the command for obedience in situations of violent coercion, I have realized that the command itself has binding power. It is not only rape's violence which dismembers the woman's sense of self. The command for obedience does so also.

Once issued, the command, by its nature as a command, evokes response behaviors. Obedience, psychic withdrawal, rebellion, or other response behaviors are secondary to the command. The issuer of the command is the agent of action. The recipient of the command can only respond. She can not easily initiate action

outside the field of the command. During rape a woman not only is terrorized by the explicit coerciveness of the rapist's physical violence against her. In addition, I believe, she is bound by the rapist's demands for her obedience to him.

Obedience and disobedience, while appearing to be polar opposites, do not function in such a dualistic manner. Rather, once a demand has been forcefully established in a situation of coercion, it functions in a binding manner. While the recipient of a demand can choose to obey or to disobey, it is impossible to escape the demand's power by disobedience. It is impossible to unite obedience and disobedience in a behavioral resolution which negates the command of its power to bind the recipient to it.

Demands for obedience unilaterally control the recipients of those demands. Enacted obedience responses reflect the power of the demand to elicit behavior. In a similar manner, disobedience behaviors also reflect the power of the demand to elicit behavior. Vis-a-vis the presence of a demand for obedience, both responses (disobedience or obedience) bind the demand's recipient within the power field of the demand.

Whatever response the recipient makes to obedience demands, that response, by its nature as a response,



has tied the recipient to the field of command. All responses, no matter what their nature, reinforce the power of the one who issues the demand for obedience. In situations of coercion, obedience and disobedience both function to reinforce the system of dominance. Because of this binding quality of obedience demands, the rapist's near-total control of the woman's body-self is especially dismembering. She is not allowed to escape, in any way, the field of his demands for her obedience. Not only is her body-self assaulted, her will is also bound. Obedient, she is tied to the rapist's dominating agency; disobedient, she is also tied. Either choice further disempowers her. Like the physical restriction of rape on her body, the power structure of coerced commands functions to restrict her will as well.

I understand the function of obedience in rape's colonization of women's minds to lie in the psychological results of coercive commands for obedience behaviors. In situations of coercion, whether the victim chooses to obey or disobey a demand for obedience, her action is defined by her relationship to the command. Her behavioral, cognitive and emotional responses are defined by the conditions of the demand. As long as she is prohibited from

leaving the active field of the demand, she is bound within its power. She is not free to ignore it or transform it in any way.

I believe it is of this reality that Starhawk writes when she says that the system of dominance (or an individual oppressor) controls the responses of obedience and disobedience in subordinate persons. Obedience by the subordinate is expensive to the self because obedience dismembers the self. Compliance, during a situation of victimization, means that the self is enlisted in her own self-destruction. Starhawk asserts that the self inevitably hates itself after compliance behaviors because the self perceives that the woman has participated in her own victimization and its concomitant self-destruction (1988, p. 81).

The decision to disobey may also dismember the self. Unless disobedience can successfully challenge the framework of reality in which the victim is trapped, her acts of rebellion become self-destructive as well. Unless resistance changes the reality in which she is trapped, she encounters further dangers and victimization. She remains trapped in the circle of victimization. The choices presented to the victim are choices, according to Starhawk, which inevitably increase the victimizers ability to control her (1988,

pp. 81-82). This is so because systems of coercive authority need victims who will obey and victims who will disobey.

Acts of rebellion and disobedience, directed against systems of coercive obedience, provide excuses for additional violence from the dominating system (or individual). Violence enacted against those who rebel reminds others of the survival values of obedience. Violence which punishes the rebellious, disobedient individual reinforces obedience in the obedient ones. In their actions of obedience due to fear, the obedient are colonized (p. 82).

Thus, if Starhawk is correct, it is possible to hypothesize that the cultural form of rape needs disobedient women who are killed or mutilated during rape in order to teach other women that resistance to rape is futile and will destroy them. Certainly Susan's comments (Cohn, 1975, p. 7) that she thought only of women who were described in newspapers as molested and dead, indicate the teaching power of mutilated and dead women to women assaulted in a rape event. I think it is impossible to say whether or not each rapist needs women who obey and women who disobey. It is certain, however, that some rapists appear to need women's threatened disobedience in order to rape.

As long as she was immobilized by fear and non-active, Catherine H.'s (Anonymous, 1975) rapist could not get an erection. Emerging from paralyzed fear when she realized he could not get an erection, she became enraged at his continuing efforts to put a limp penis in her vagina. "I began to kick and go for his eyes. He got an erection immediately." Subjecting her to a stream of verbal abuse, he would interrupt himself to say, "See? You love it. Say you love it." After his orgasm, he asked her "Did you come?" (p. 15). It appears as though her resistance was essential to his ability to perform sexually in a sexual assault situation.

Starhawk (1988) claims that cultural patterns, expressed in communal life, are not accidental. Culture provides people with a language, not spoken, that creates and reveals an internal set of expectations about how people should act. When a participant in culture makes (enacts) a behavior, that behavior reveals the pattern language of his or her culture. Communal patterns reveal a culture's deepest assumptions, structures, and power relationships. All living cultures "have pattern languages . . . for all aspects of life. . . . Each [is] true to itself and to its relationships with others" (p. 95). These pattern languages, constructed of cultural assumptions and

expectations, are replicated in human consciousness. In situations of domination (power-over), the external event replicates what is already within the human psyche (pp. 95-96).

If we assume, with Starhawk, that dominance structures which demand women's obedience are pattern languages; and if we assume that cultural forms are not accidental but revelatory of a culture's values; rape as a cultural form within women's lives becomes a hall of dismembering, mirrors. Each mirror reflects structures of embedded obedience in women's psyches. Rape, beginning for the woman in an act of terror where she must obey to survive, refracts and distills her personal collection of stories, values, and expectations about obedience to men. This collection of personal stories reflects her embeddedness within her culture's pattern language about men's authority and power, and about domination and rape (Sanday, 1981a).

The event of rape, threatening and terror-filled, becomes a metaphor for her continuing domination-patriarchal domination which began before her rape and patriarchal domination which will continue even after the rape event is concluded and she is once again physically safe. This continuing domination reinforces the domination of rape which now exists within her

mind. She has been successfully colonized. Her powers of the will to resist men's insistence upon her submission and obedience have been removed from her in a surgically precise event.

One task of her recovery period is to relearn empowerment of her will to act in self-protection. She will need to learn to resist the rape inside her mind. Because of the rape's intimate tie to bodily awareness and kinesthetic sensation; and because of the presence of anxiety which may or may not have been dissociated, the woman cannot simply forget her rape and go on living life as if it has not happened.

She will, instead, need to integrate its presence in her life history in some way. To move out of the post-rape crisis into an embodied wholeness of spirit, body, emotion, and cognition, she will need to learn how to resist the embedded rape in her mind. This means, also, that she will need to confront the continuing efforts of patriarchal culture to disempower and further dismember her. Sensitized to sexual violence because of her rape she will need to learn how to handle the culture's repeated admonitions to men about the desirability of rape. She will need to learn how to survive additional events in her own life which appear to function like rape in reducing her freedom to make personal choices about her life and her sexuality.

Starhawk, writing of resistance to the embedded jail in the minds of women who have been jailed, states "Awareness is the beginning of all resistance" (p. 79).

Resistance means becoming and remaining conscious of the self, conscious of the way reality is constructed around us, conscious of each seemingly insignificant choice we make, conscious that we are, in fact, making choices. Resistance becomes a discipline of awareness, akin to any spiritual discipline that demands we remain present to our experience. When we resist domination, we must practice magic-the art of changing consciousness at will. (p. 79)

E. Janeway's (1981) comments about conscious psychic resistance to tyranny even in situations of surprise, shame, and pain (p. 215) find support in Starhawk's insistence, not upon disobedience and rebellion which fuel oppression, but upon resistance to the very notion of obedience and authority as a form of power-over.

For Janeway, the necessary action is to distrust, disbelieve, and withdraw consent. The first act of disbelief is refusal to accept the definition of the self put forward by the powerful (1981, p. 167). When terror creates immobility, the weak can still refuse to accept and believe the definition of reality proposed to them by their victimizer. They can, indeed, they must refuse to image themselves as sub-human (p. 215).

The woman's experience of tyranny, located in a context of social myths about authority and obedience,

can be resisted even when the woman is unable to leave the field of tyranny. Janeway and Starhawk appear to agree. Even if physical resistance is impossible or too costly to the woman's body-self, internal, psychic resistance has rescuing powers for the woman. Work in the previous chapter on anxiety states, in situations which imply death, indicates how difficult psychic resistance is during a situation of sexual violence where the woman fears for her life.

However, once in the post-rape period, this type of resistance can be healing to the woman. Much of this healing will occur as women begin to understand the power of the rapist to continue his possession of her life even after he has left her presence. Janeway and Starhawk both suggest that the banding together of the dispossessed and disempowered is essential for learning such resistance (Janeway, p. 168-185; Starhawk, pp. 9-11). Starhawk, in particular, encourages women to think of personal empowerment as power-with and power-within.

The rapist, in his demands for absolute obedience, reflects cultural structures and forms in which women's obedience to men is valued. Within situations of such coercion, the woman cannot readily escape the consequences of an obedience demand. The very presence of a coercible demand in her life which she cannot escape,



binds her to her victimizer. She becomes one-whose-power-to-choose-is-removed-by-the-command-to-obey. In other words, she becomes the powerless one. Powerless to prevent her actual rape, she is assaulted further by the rapist's demand that she enact behaviors which involve her own obedience-disobedience responses. A tertiary form of powerlessness occurs when she internalizes the rapist's demands and makes them her own.

I think an example of the binding power of an obedience command occurs when the rapist says to a woman as he is leaving, "Don't move for thirty minutes or I will kill you." Some women disobey the command, get up as soon as the rapist leaves their presence, and may even watch him as he leaves the area where rape occurred. Many of these women report an overpowering post-rape anxiety that the rapist will return to kill them for disobeying him. Other women hear the command and remain silent, immobilized, and filled with terror. Fearing that the rapist is watching them and that any disobedience will result in death, they obey his injunction. After rape, they too fear that he will return to rape them again or to murder them. Neither obedience nor disobedience has freed these women from the coercive field of a rapist's final command to them after rape.

Neither obedience nor disobedience removes the woman's preoccupation with the rapist's command and his threat to return to do more violence. Both forms of behavior are tied to his command. She is not free to initiate movement without making reference to the command. Either response is still a response to the rapist's final demand of her. Even though the rapist has removed himself from her physical space, he continues to dominate her mental space.

The rapist has placed his victim in a situation where she has no easy choices. With obedience and compliance to his commands, she understands she will be raped. With the potential of disobedience countered by his threats for heightened violence, she fears she will be mutilated or killed. The presence of the rapist in her life, in a situation where escape is impossible, places her in a double-bind. No response which she can make is a "right response." Any or all of her behaviors, chosen for her by her rapist or by herself, have the potential to bring escalating violence and harm to her body-self. The language which women use to describe this situation is one of overpowering terror that goes on and on long after the rapist is no longer physically present in their lives. This terror may continue after the rapist is imprisoned or after he is dead.

Starhawk and Janeway invite us to consider, however, the healing and self-protective power of the victim's inner resistance to the covert messages of obedience demands. The woman can resist believing the rapist's message that she is inferior to him and a nonperson. She can meta-communicate within herself that her rapist is wrong. She can continue to reframe his demands into an inner protest against his abuse of her body and her will. She can identify herself as a fully human person who deserves to be treated better than the rapist is treating her. She can stay aware that his violence reflects his choices and not her own. She can refuse to accept, as her own, responsibility for his actions.

#### Obedience, Double-binds, and Dismemberment

In 1956, anthropologist G. Bateson and his associates published the first theoretical description of a pathological communication-relationship pattern between two people which resulted in intense psychic distress for one of them (Jackson, 1968). The research team of Bateson, J. Haley, J. Weakland and D. Jackson named this pattern the double-bind (Bateson, Jackson, Haley and Weakland, 1968). One of the places where they observed the double-bind pattern was in family

systems of schizophrenic adolescents and adults. Their double-bind work has been a significant factor in creating awareness of the interactional and interpersonal nature of pathology in human systems.

Characteristics of the double bind, according to Bateson, et al., (1968), Bateson (1972), Haley, (1976), and Weakland (1976a) include three major components. First, there is an intense relationship in which the message receiving individual (victim) feels it is vitally important to discriminate what sort of message is being communicated by a second person (victimizer). The victim is concerned with responding appropriately to the messages received from the victimizer. Secondly, however, the receiving individual (victim) is caught in a situation in which the message sender (victimizer) expresses two contradictory injunctions. Both injunctions carry negative sanctions for the victim's failure to make the appropriate response. The receiving individual (victim) is prohibited from leaving the field of the contradictory messages. Denied the opportunity to leave the field of contradiction, the receiver is faced with having to decide how to respond to two contradictory messages with two incongruent behavioral injunctions or demands (Weakland, 1976a, pp. 25-26). And, finally, she is prohibited from making a meta-communicative statement

to her victimizer about her dilemma (Bateson, 1968, pp. 35-36; Bateson, 1972, pp. 206-216; Weakland, 1976a, pp. 24-25).

P. Watzlawick (1968), commenting on the work of the Bateson group, adds that in double-bind situations, the recipient of the bind feels "on the spot" because of his [sic] impaired ability to clearly differentiate between the two contradictory messages in a meaningful manner. Therefore, the individual cannot respond appropriately. The usual response of people in high intensity or high contact situations is to respond with defensive maneuvers (p. 75). Bateson, in a letter to N. Wiener in 1954, wrote about the double-bind as a form of paradox:

Such seems to be the case when an organism is both punished for some action and punished when he shows by avoiding this action that he has learned that it would be punished. To make this abstract example more vivid, we refer to the very unpleasant experience of receiving punishment for cringing. (Haley, 1976, p. 67)

The double-bind was described as a relational conflict between levels of messages as well as between levels of learning. Haley writes, "The fuller description [of the double-bind] included the idea that when one person communicates two levels of message to another when these levels both qualify and conflict with each other, the person is faced with an impossible situation" (Haley, 1976, p. 68). In this situation the

recipient cannot respond to either level of message without violating a prohibition attached to its alternate level. "The bind becomes complete when the "victim" cannot leave the field or comment upon his [sic] impossible situation" (p. 68).

Bateson (1972) abstracts the primary negative injunction into two styles: "Do not do so and so, or I will punish you." and "If you do not do so and so, I will punish you" (p. 206). The secondary injunction is sent on a different channel of communication than the first. Bateson says that the secondary injunction is usually sent by nonverbal means. "Posture, tone of voice, meaningful actions, and the implications of the verbal injunction may all be used to convey this more abstract message" (p. 207). The relationship of the sender to the recipient is seen as reciprocal and circular. In any intense situation of great personal consequence or one that exists over an extended period of time, the recipient experiences great stress and frustration at the presence of a communication bind in a relationship of consequence to her.

M. Arden (1984) comments about the double-bind theory that Bateson invented the concept of the double-bind to describe the confusions which can result when important but mutually contradictory messages are sent on multiple channels. She says, "When one person

speaks to another, the message is usually conveyed in words but there are additional communications such as gesture, tone of voice and the context of the event" (p. 443). As the recipient of a message, an individual must make decisions about all the various channels.

It is doubtful if Bateson would agree he had invented the double-bind. More likely he would say he recognized it. Whatever he would say, it is clear Bateson believed the double-bind theory of interactional communication to be a major contribution to human epistemology.

In 1978, he wrote an article in which he claimed that the epistemology of the double-bind was a recursive epistemology, one that resembled the mythic worm, Ouroboros.<sup>1</sup> Within the framework of epistemology, Bateson included an unconscious one. This unconscious epistemology is the "how" of using the perceptual senses to generate perception, learning and understanding. In processes of the double-bind, these unconscious processes of untangling sensory perception are interrupted. The recipient is unable to make sense of the complete sensory pattern which she has received on various channels. When that happens, people become unsure about the nature of perceived reality. Of this insecurity, Bateson comments, "We feel that our safe illusions about 'self' are shaken" (p. 57).

Individuals can initiate double-binds. Weakland (1976a) states that the double bind message may also arise in three person situations in which sender one sends the first leg of the message and sender two sends the second. If sender one and sender two are in a parity of power, the effect is the same for the recipient as double channel, single person messages. The double-bind can also be a social phenomenon involving multiple persons, or a cultural one, which involves contradictory cultural patterns for establishing expected communal behavior.

P. Watzlawick (1968) quotes A. Watts in his application of double-bind theory to the individual-in-culture transaction whereby the person enacts cultural rules. Watts uses a game metaphor to describe members of society in relationship to society's rules. If we change Watt's use of the pronoun he to she, it is possible to recognize a description which might readily be applied to women's socialization into patterns of submission and obedience.

The members of the game are to play as if they were independent agents, but they are not to know they are just playing as if! It is explicit in the rules that the individual is self-determining, but implicit that he [sic] is so only by virtue of the rules. Further more, while he [sic] is defined as an independent agent, he [sic] must not be so independent as not to submit to the rules which define him [sic]. Thus he [sic] is defined as an agent in order to be held responsible to the group for "his" [sic] actions. The rules of the



game confer independence and take it away at the same time, without revealing the contradiction. (1968. p. 81)

In her relationships with men, the woman is often defined as agent and as responsible for her actions while enacting submissive behavior. In her culture's socialization of her to obedience, she is given the impression that she is a free agent in her choices to obey. However, often she is responding to long-standing cultural rules which she has internalized about how women are expected to relate to men. What she and others see as freely chosen in her personal style of relationships with others, may in fact be a result of cultural shaping of her psyche and environment.

The double-bind concept appears to illuminate women's experiences in culture and in rape events. As I have thought about the textual structure of rape, I have come to believe that at least two double-binds are part of many woman's experience of rape.

The first is the confusing mix of channel messages in a situation of coercion. These messages are implicit in the organization of rape behaviors as an interpersonal transaction. These messages can be described in terms of the two opposing views of rape which are currently present in our culture's interpretation of rape: rape is violence against women

and responsibility for the rape belongs to the man; rape is sexual and responsibility for rape belongs to the woman.

As we have seen in the history of the anti-rape movement, rape historically has been seen in its sexual dimension. The coercive violence of rape was culturally overlooked or denied. Following the advent of the anti-rape movement, rape has begun to be seen in its violence dimension. The sexual dimension of rape has been de-emphasized or denied. Yet the text of rape reveals that sexual violence is both sexual and violent in nature. The presence of sexual dysfunctions after rape confirms that rape has a sexual dimension for women. The presence of terror confirms the violence dimension of rape.

In terms of the double bind, the primary message during rape is one of violence. That message can be abstracted into a negative injunction. "Do not disobey me or I will kill you." The emotional tone is one of rage or hostility directed against the woman.

The secondary injunction can be abstracted as a positive injunction, "Obey me and sexual intimacy will result." This latter message is transmitted on a non-verbal, kinesthetic channel. It is experienced as the rapist's body merges with his victim's body in close, intimate, physical contact. The sexual element of rape

appears, by the behavior involved, to mimic the intimacy of mutually desired sexual intercourse.

Physical arousal may be perceived by the woman; some women report orgasmic responses during rape. The presence of physiologic arousal during rape is usually confusing to women. C. Ellen, in a personal commentary upon this chapter (1989), reports arousal during rape may be infuriating to women after rape as they deal with their own perceptions that their condition of physical arousal implied consent or agreement with the cultural belief that women really want to be raped.

The awareness of arousal requires contextual interpretation to know what type of arousal is involved. In other words, the twitch or the wink distinction which must be made by the woman is a contextual one. She must process what she knows about arousal in all of its various forms and interpret her awareness of arousal during rape. Physiological arousal caused by fear and physiological arousal caused by sexual desire do not differ greatly. Both are biological responses to intense sensory stimulation. The differentiation between the arousal of fear and the arousal of sexual desire is primarily contextual and interpretive. If women do not understand the arousal

of fear as an equivalent physiologic state to that of desire, post-rape they may not be able to sort out the meanings of what they really experienced during rape.

The role of physiological arousal during the course of a rape event is one which has been used against women in literature describing women's masochism. Now, among many feminist women, it is politically incorrect to discuss it in the anti-rape movement. Yet women report experiencing it and are confused by it. This is an area in rape studies and post-rape theory which needs to be de-politicized so that women can learn to understand and accept their body's reactions during rape.

During rape, the rapist sends a contradictory message. By his decision to rape the woman, he sends a "come close" message, a physical message of sexual intimacy, and a "keep your distance" message, a verbal as well as physical message of coercion and violence.

I think this confusion of messages may be one reason why young women in date rape situations have such difficulty knowing whether or not they were raped (Warshaw, 1988). Even though they did not want to be violated and did not want a particular act of sexual intercourse, nevertheless, the act of date rape mimics sexual intercourse. In a closed field of sexual violence from which they have been unable to escape,

young women have received a mixed message. The man may have said to them, "I care about you. I want sex with you." With their protest or denial of his wishes, the man then communicates, "You will yield to my desires. I am going to force you to have sex with me." The woman has received a message of sexual desire and a message of coerced obedience to the man's wishes. She is unable to negotiate a meaningful resolution of these two messages. During the act of rape, the rapist is physically intimate with her. Yet that intimacy is by means of coercion. M. Koss' research with college women indicates that for many of these women it is only after the second assault by the same man that they define his actions as rape (1988a, 1988b).

The second double-bind for women during a rape event is the one which I have attempted to identify above in the section on the binding power of obedience commands. During rape, the woman faces the reality that her obedience to the rapist yields rape whereas disobedience carries a strong possibility of physical abuse and death. The obedience command, in rape, functions as a double-bind. If the woman obeys the man's overt commands and her perception of his rage against her, she will be raped; if she disobeys the covert message that rape is to enforce her obedience, she may be killed. According to double-bind theory,

the only escape from this kind of bind is to escape the field of the demand or to meta-communicate about the impossibility of making such a choice in self-empowered ways.

During rape, neither possibility of breaking the power of obedience demands is seen as possible by the woman. Since the presence of a double-bind intensifies stress and anxiety, it is likely that this form of anxiety compounds the anxiety of death fears. Both are likely to be dissociated together. The woman may, therefore, lose her sense of being bound in an impossible situation. She may, after rape, become highly self-critical for whatever behaviors she used to survive.

Social science literature reveals a number of double-binds which the woman may face culturally after rape. If attractive, her rape may be attributed to her physical beauty; if ugly, her rape may be attributed to behaviors. In either case, she is held responsible. The reality is that ugly and attractive women are raped; young and old women are raped; bright and retarded women are raped; single and married women are raped; virgins and non-virgins are raped; respectable women and women judged as not very respectable (prostitutes, for example) are raped. There is no way

a woman can construct a rape-free scenario for her life. Yet, after rape she is treated as if she should have known better than to be raped.

During my research into the double-bind, it has seemed to me that all women in a patriarchal culture are entrapped in a series of double-binds. I wonder if the predominant means of colonizing people's minds is not by use of cultural double-binds.

Patriarchal Christianity for example teaches two contradictory doctrines of humanity. In one, all people are created in God's image. In the other, only men are created in God's image. Yet, when feminist theologians make meta-communications about this contradiction, they often are told that their spiritual understandings are distorted. Interpreters of creation texts clearly have had a misogynist view of women and their sexuality. Yet, women are repeatedly told that these texts and interpretations of texts have originated with God, Himself.

It has grown clear to me in the course of this dissertation that the double-bind may be the predominant communication pattern that socializes servants into accepting their servantness. The demand for obedience, wherever it occurs, functions as a double-bind.

To illustrate my questions about this, I want to quote at length from an illustration used by Bateson. In his later works about the double-bind, he recycles the story in some form or other. In addition, many other authors also discuss it in their commentary upon Bateson's work. An extended version appears in his 1978 chapter. I will quote the abbreviated version found in his 1969 article (quoted in the 1976 work).<sup>2</sup> One reason for including the story is due to the clarity of description of a transactional double-bind. The second reason is to make, at the conclusion of Bateson's storytelling, a metacomment about the story from my perspective as a woman reader. Bateson begins:

Consider a very simple paradigm: a female porpoise . . . is trained to accept the sound of the trainer's whistle as a "secondary reinforcement." The whistle is expectably followed by food, and if she later repeats what she was doing when the whistle blew, she will expectably again hear the whistle and receive food.

This porpoise is now used by the trainers to demonstrate "operant conditioning" to the public. When she enters the exhibition tank, she raises her head above surface, hears the whistle and is fed. She then raises her head again and is again reinforced. Three repetitions of this sequence is enough for the demonstration and the porpoise is then sent off-stage to wait for the next performance two hours later. She has learned some simple rules which relate her actions, the whistle, the exhibition tank, and the trainer into a pattern--a contextual structure, a set of rules for how to put the information together.

But this pattern is fitted only for a single episode in the exhibition tank. She must break that pattern to deal with the class of such



episodes. There is a larger context of contexts [emphasis his] which will put her in the wrong.

At the next performance, the trainer again wants to demonstrate "operant conditioning," but to do this she must pick on a different piece of conspicuous behavior.

When the porpoise comes on stage, she again raises her head. But she gets no whistle. The trainer waits for the next piece of conspicuous behavior--likely a tail flap, which is a common expression of annoyance. This behavior is then reinforced and repeated.

But the tail flap was, of course, not rewarded in the third performance.

Finally the porpoise learned to deal with the context of contexts--by offering a different or new [emphasis his] piece of conspicuous behavior whenever she came on stage. (1976, pp. 241-242)

Two additional vectors were important in the porpoise's experience of training. Trainers reported they had to break the rules of operant conditioning many times because being in the wrong so disturbed the porpoise, that the trainer broke the rules in order to keep the human-porpoise relationship. Secondly, in each of fourteen sequential demonstrations, the porpoise did many random demonstrations of her repertoire of previously reinforced behaviors. In the times between her appearances on-stage, she appeared increasingly agitated. During the fifteenth session, she came on stage and demonstrated eight new pieces of behavior including four which were never before observed in porpoises (p. 242).

Bateson abstracts his own formulation of the porpoise's learning and resolution of the multiple, sequential double binds which she faced. "Severe pain and maladjustment can be induced by putting a mammal in the wrong regarding its rules for making sense of an important relationship with another mammal" (p. 242). Secondly if the mammal can resist the formation of pathology, the total experience may promote creativity (p. 242).

Training of a porpoise in a situation where the porpoise is not free and equal with the trainer can be seen as roughly analogous to women's situation in patriarchal culture. In all of the literature about this narrative, no man comments upon the "enslavement" of the porpoise for research purposes. Since it is now common knowledge that the porpoise is an intelligent social animal which bonds to humans even in the wild, this porpoise is caught in a meta-double-bind. She is now, in her captured state, dependent upon her human trainer for life. She can no longer hunt her own food sources or freely choose her actions. She must be a good porpoise to continue to live. It is possible in this story to intuit that what Bateson sees as creativity is really a desperate attempt to survive by a highly evolved mammal.

After the first porpoise demonstrated this amazing attempt to please her captors during a public entertainment event, the research team carefully researched the same training behaviors, with the other porpoises. They found a similar structure of response among all of the porpoises.

From all of the accounts of this porpoise training behavior, there is no systematic analysis of human oppressiveness towards these intelligent, social animals. Bateson does not appear to inquire as to the usefulness of the "new" behaviors to the porpoise. As a woman who has been studying rape socialization in a culture which sanctions rape, I want to say to the porpoise:

You have been abused. These men have tamed you, domesticated you, and then put your agitation and pain on display. They have called your learning by a man's name of creativity. I call it by a woman's name of survival behaviors. Like all oppressors, the man thought he was in a relationship with you which he could maintain by his rules. Sometimes his rules even involved breaking his own rules. At times he handed you goodies which "you did not deserve." He repeatedly and deliberately violated your ability to make sense of his demands. He sought to make you into a new creation, one where he was the creator and you were the created one. Seeking to survive, you attempted to please him. Yet it is doubtful you found your own pleasure in these new behaviors--behaviors not seen before among porpoises...whether in the wild or in captivity. Your domestication into obedience to your trainer pains me. It is similar to the human man's domestication of woman into obedience to his demands of her.

It is necessary to understand that human recipients of double bind messages may feel frustrated, helpless, confused or abused by an interaction which binds them from making a reasonable response to another person's communication. Especially in power-over situations, where the sanctions are perceived as harmful to the recipient's well-being, their response is one of rage. The common phrase, "damned if I do and damned if I don't" denotes some of the frustration of being bound to a message-sender in ways which do not allow a congruent, specific, appropriate response.

It is also important to note that a congruent meta-communication by the recipient that exposes the bind may trigger rage in the sender. When power is maintained by one person over another by means of double-binds, the de-toxification of the double-bind structure releases the recipient from the power of the sender. With this release from the binder's power, the binder may seek to re-assert his control by verbal or physical assaults.

The Bateson group hypothesized that the consistent presence of double-bind communication structures in childhood was a significant factor in the etiology of adolescent and adult pathology. The power of the double-bind lies in its prevention of congruent communication and shared validation of experience.

If double-bind patterns are a predominant way in which women are domesticated and made obedient, women who seek to escape the control of the double-bind must carefully seek to identify the two contradictory messages which bind them. Meta-communicative statements may then be made in a variety of ways. As we have noted above awareness is the first step in the transformation of one's life from a situation in which one is bound to one in which there is freedom to grow and live.

## Notes

## Chapter 10

1. According to Walker (1988), the Ouroboros is the great World Serpent who encircled the earth or, alternately, the mystic world egg. Its visual representation is that of a serpent which has grasped its own tail in its mouth to make an endless round. This serpent image is at times associated with Hermes and Aphrodite (p. 204); with the early pre-Christian earth dragons of Europe (p. 243); with sea serpents such as the Loch Ness monster (p. 273); with Gaia or Hera, the great earth goddesses (p. 387); and at times with the serpent that guarded the tree of knowledge in Paradise (p. 388).

Of the Ouroboros, Bateson (1978) simply says, "The network of ideas or matrix has been fertile. . . . it has given birth to more parts of itself, that the matrix has been a growing thing getting more complex, wider, . . . and more fertile as time has gone on" (p.41). For Bateson, this matrix is a recursive epistemology and an epistemology of recursiveness. It deals with how we are to understand realities which return to bite their own tails and to control their own beginnings (p. 41). Bateson opposes quantification as an epistemology which tortures nature to give an answer that is not in its own epistemology. Quantification always avoids yielding the perception of pattern. The Ouroboros epistemology is immanent within nature. Bateson claims that he is interested, not in count and measure science but in the ideas which circle around and in the ways of knowing which grant access to these ideas (p. 42). Bateson is interested in perception and interpretation as these exist in the service of mammalian learning.

2. See G. Bateson, (1976/1969) Double bind, 1969. In C. E. Sluzki and D. C. Ransom. Double bind: The foundation of the communication approach to the family. New York: Grune and Stratton.

## Chapter 11

### The Woman Healer: Journeys to Remembrance

What we are not we each could be  
and every woman is myself.

Sally Miller Gearhart  
The Wanderground

#### Introduction

Learning to listen to other women's stories of sexual violence can become a terrifying personal journey for women. As a listening woman looks into the face of another woman who speaks of her journey into rape's terror and pain, the listening woman is confronted with the narrative of rape as a text which affects her life also. As a woman she too lives in this culture which sanctions rape as a weapon against women. She too lives in this culture which uses rape as an educational method for teaching women to be obedient and submissive to men who hate them.

The story-telling woman's story reveals that rape functions to deplete the personal power of women. Rape leaves women feeling vulnerable, dependent, and fragile. Often the woman's rage at being violated does not empower her. Instead it terrorizes her into believing that she has gone crazy.

The emerging literature of alternative healing indicates that the spiritual healer is a healer who has been wounded by facing the evil spirits which create disease and woundedness. J. Achterberg (1988) writes of spiritual healers called shamans that they have encountered personal crisis and personal transformation. Their awareness, gained from their own journey into woundedness, teaches them "knowledge about the way of things" (p. 116). With the insight and wisdom gained during their journeys into the realms of the spirits, they serve their healing vocation. Their wounding teaches them empathy and an ability to hear what is unsaid and to see what is not visible.

The journey of initiation for the spiritual healer is different from the journey of initiates in the traditional curing disciplines of Western patriarchal cultures. In Western patriarchal medicine, initiates are taught to distance themselves from their patients, to guard against over-involvement, and to establish rigid boundaries between themselves as professionals and their patients as clients. Achterberg says of the professions that "the tools and techniques that are taught in [the] professions serve as a shield to protect one from the wounding--from the arrow of understanding" (p. 118).



The way of healing, as opposed to the way of curing, however, is a journey into wounding. It emphasizes the invisible bond of power between the healer and the healee. Some, she says, "call this bond love" (p. 122). "It comes forth from the desire to make and to be made well or whole" (p. 122). Development of this bond is the essential work of the healer.

The wounding can be a crisis of the healer's own life, from which she emerges as a different and transformed person. I believe that learning to see the contextual existence of rape as a potential reality in the life of any woman, presents the woman listener with such a time of crisis and wounding. If, indeed, any woman could be herself, then any woman's wounding by rape becomes her own wounding as well.

Describing three types of spiritual wounding as disharmony, fear, and soul loss, Achterberg writes that each "body/mind/spirit seems to respond to inner and outer loss in a unique way" (p. 121). Disharmony is the state in which someone loses meaning to life and forgets the feeling of belonging and connectedness to others. Chronic fear causes the person to lose love, joy, and trust in others and trust in the force of life itself. Soul loss is "injury to the inviolate core

which is the essence of a person's being" (p. 121). As we have seen, the woman who has been wounded by rape experiences each of these in some unique titrant which expresses her own experienced reality.

#### Potential Responses by Listening Women

In listening to the deep voice of another woman's story, the listening woman calls to her own voice, to her own story to sustain her. She calls forth the various wounds and strengths of her own life as guides to understanding the story of the speaking woman. If the listening woman has never deliberately considered rape as her own wound, she inevitably reaches inchoate understandings of what it means to listen and to hear such a story.

In this situation, one response to another woman's story of rape is to create defenses against it. The listening woman builds a wall against the pain and denies the possibility of the story being told at all. A woman who says, "I don't know any women who have been raped," needs to examine the structure of her own wall against learning about rape of women. J. Katz (1984) describes women who denied she (Katz) was raped.

Katz's understanding of this reality is that "by denying my being raped, these women could deny that they, too, were potential victims" (p. 47).

A second response is to mystify the other woman's story into a story which is barely recognizable as a story of pain and terror. By this process, one claims the other's story as one's own to name and tell. Cameron calls this the creation of a lie (Cameron, 1986, p. 2).

Professional language and codes of diagnosis can be used to surround and mystify the woman's story so that it can be listened to without feeling the impact of its terror. Much of the language, for example, of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (1980) regarding the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) would be confusing to the woman who has been raped. By labeling the post-rape genre of the woman's story as PTSD, we name it in neutral, emotion free language. We titrate away its pain and terror. We participate in a mechanistic, curing model rather than in a healing one.

While the PTSD diagnosis allows the woman who has been raped to receive reimbursement from insurance companies for therapy after rape, it is a mixed blessing to the woman. Her story is given a number and categorized. Its narrative power to evoke empathy from

the healer is lessened. In a sense, labeling (diagnosing) a story is a form of domestication. Its wildness is tamed into something that is manageable.

Numbering and categorizing a story allows the listening woman to feel as if she has done something to help. It provides security to the listening woman that she does not need to face the pain and rage of rape without support from the therapeutic community of experts. Even though the PTSD diagnosis reflects the impact of situation and event in the survivor's symptoms after rape, it, by its nature as a diagnosis, labels and categorizes the woman's story in mystifying ways. The creation of a diagnosis participates in curing attempts to objectify her story, to make it manageable.

A third response is to deny her story happened at all or to create alternative meanings of her story. The best example of this response is victim-blaming or victim-trashing. Her story is taken from her, retold, and shaped into a weapon to be used against her. She is re-created into a woman who "tells stories" or lies.

A fourth response is to trivialize her story and its pain. Included in trivialization is the demand that the woman in pain hurry up and get well. Too long

a period spent in seeking recovery is seen as evidence of a defective personality or of defective coping mechanisms.

A fifth response is to totally encapsulate the woman's story into one's own personal story as if it belonged to the listener. Women who tell the story of their rape can have it absorbed by the fears and anxieties of their listeners. Katz writes about the unhelpfulness of acquaintances who expressed an immediate desire to kill her rapist for her. She interprets this as responding to their own fears about rape and their own needs, thereby forgetting her and her needs (1984, p. 48).

A final response is to accept the story of rape as it is told, listening carefully as the woman searches through her own story in search of self-healing. Katz describes helpful listening as listening when friends were able to ask what she needed and to help her to help herself. They were able to share honest reactions to her rape without overwhelming her with the need to take care of their emotional reactions to her rape (1984, pp. 48-49).

The Listening Woman: Recognition of a Familiar Story

Careful listening and caring often involves recognition by the woman-healer that rape is also her own story, whether or not she has ever been raped. Careful listening to the life experiences of a second woman often brings her to a time and place where she hears her own story. It is in this time and place that the listening woman begins a process of self-healing so that she can help others.

The listening woman learns that this external story of rape in the life of another woman reverberates with such power in her own life, because it is a story she already knows as her own. The pain of the first hearing of a story of sexual violation is her own pain at recognizing the other woman's story as the story of all women. The pain of the first hearing is recognizing and honoring the pain of the storytelling woman and realizing she, as listener, is powerless to take it away. The pain of the first hearing is the ignition of rage so great it threatens to destroy everything and everyone it touches. The pain of the first hearing is that she realizes she cannot be objective about this story and that her own subjectivity is filled with wishes to deny, mystify, trivialize, blame, and rescue. The pain of the first

hearing is that all attempts to listen remind her of her self's need to be healed also. The complexity of listening simultaneously to her own pain and to the pain of another is the journey of the healer.

The story of rape is a story where the terrors of the embodied story reflect the terrors of being embedded in a culture that sanctions and promulgates rape. The text of rape is known to all women in patriarchal cultures. A woman has only to feel fear on a deserted street when hearing footsteps which match her own to know that fear of rape is also her story.

For the woman who decides she will learn how to listen to the stories of women who have been raped, the journey to being able to hear is painful. In another woman's story of her violation, the listening woman finds a mirror of deeply rooted fears. In the story of another woman's violation, she hears the message that all women can be violated. In another woman's loss of trust and security, she realizes the dangers of misplaced trust and security. In another woman's despair, she identifies her own despair. In the rage of the other woman at her violator, she confronts her own hatred and rage toward men who rape.

As the listening woman searches deep within herself for the resounding memories that yield intuitions and hearings, she goes where she has not

previously traversed. Even listening women who have been raped hear nuances of pain and terror unknown to their own experience when they listen to the stories of other women who have been raped.

Women who have never been raped, must learn a new language of hearing. In another woman's story of rape, they hear a story they recognize but may not comprehend. In order to understand, they must become students of the story's syntax and grammar. Once understanding of the story of rape begins to take place, another woman's storied account of sexual assault becomes a story which can elicit care-filled, empathic understanding in the consciousness of the listening woman.

Women who have been sexually violated have an informed sensitivity and intuition about people who can be with them in their own journey to self-healing. Women who want to help women must deal with their own internalized terror about rape in order that they can support the survivor without taking over her life. The survivor of rape will heal herself. She will re-integrate her life in one manner or another. According to Katz, the goal is to reach a time when the rape is no longer "the [emphasis hers] fundamental core around which one's life is built" (p. 63).



Long-term integration may take several years. Re-traumatization can open the wounds which have healed, leaving the woman with fears that she may never heal. Yet, when the woman begins to feel again in control of her life, she can organize her life around other fundamental cores.

As the listening woman begins to journey into the text of rape, she replicates, to some degree at least, the journey made by the woman who has been raped. She frequently must cope with internal terror, rage, grief, hatred, confusion, and paranoia, as well as with physiological or visceral responses of nausea, crying, pacing, explosive talking, paralyzed withdrawal, or other behaviors reminiscent of the life experiences of women after rape. She confronts the world of the woman who has been raped as a shadow image of her own world. She finds similar social responses to her experience of describing the world of rape as the victim of rape does in her descriptions of her experiences of rape.

#### Personal Reflections

I have been fascinated by other's responses to me in the process of writing this dissertation. People, on finding out that I am researching and writing a dissertation, politely or with interest (depending on

the situation) ask about what I am writing. I say something vague about writing a dissertation on rape and women's self-healing after rape. Often, the questioner's behavioral response to my answer is one which is reminiscent of observers' behavior when seeing a serious social faux pas being made. The relational space gets very quiet. Clearly, even the mention of the word rape carries a taboo message in social environments.

I think I have experienced, in addition, most of the kinds of responses which surfaced in the literature review. I have been verbally attacked, ignored, insistently told the topic is not important enough for a dissertation, and treated as if I carry a social disease. A physician told me I did not understand that marital intercourse was often forceful and commented that, as a single person, I could not understand the vigorous nature of sexual relationships within long-term relationships. I have experienced abrupt conversational shifts away from me or the topic, and heard stale, tired jokes about rape. I have also experienced women who want to talk more about the topic because of personal experiences with rape either as a victim or as a friend of a victim.

I have learned what it means to be afraid of talking about the topic. After teaching some of the

content of this dissertation in a class of forty undergraduate students, I received a series of late night obscene phone calls in which my personal sexuality was attacked. The college was concerned enough about my concerns for my personal safety that they turned on a monitoring device which could identify repeated phone calls to my home from on-campus numbers.

On days when I taught this content in class, I grew very watchful of my environment during transitions from office to car to home. I joked with friends about this as my personal paranoia. But my inner experience was one of great anxiety, caution and watchfulness. My intuitions all along have been a fear that writing and talking about rape may lure rape. Once the text is written, I cannot control its readers' reactions to the words of the text. Once the word is spoken, I cannot control its course in others' lives.

Agnes Whistling Elk's comments to Lynn Andrews (Andrews, 1984) about the luring power of our fears has been very instructive to me during this study. If there is transpersonal communication of fear, and if women's fear activates men's predatory activity, then women who wish to address rape openly must be very aware of their fears and careful to manage them appropriately. They must shield their inner powers so that they do not leak away from them. I have found the

transformation of rage from a blazing, out of control fire, into a blazing source of energy to provide me with courage and awareness. Whenever I begin to think about rape spontaneously, without a visible or audible clue that I am in danger, I scan my environment. When possible, I move away into another space. If possible, I enlist others' help or support.

I have learned to avoid the topic when I am unsure of another's response to me. I have sometimes answered the query, "What are you writing about?" with the answer that the dissertation is about the hermeneutics of women's healing as a spiritual and psychological metaphor. That is so abstruse to most people that I get blank looks in return and the ubiquitous, "Oh."

I have learned to be watchful of people's comfort levels with me in discussions where the topic of rape is raised. I have become very aware of men's responses to the topic. These responses have served as a barometer for my own interests in pursuing conversations about rape in front of them. In some situations, I have deliberately used reverse double-binding to disallow men's freedom to comment on rape in situations where I wanted to talk with women while men were present and observing.

I have learned that any discussion of rape among women, even when guarded and shielded, elicits strong

reactions among women. I have begun to preface any teaching I do about rape with a reminder to women that rape is a difficult story to hear. I warn students, for example, by syllabi and verbal reminders, that the topic of rape is to be discussed on specific days. In social conversations, I try to signal in polite ways that rape is frightening. In correspondence, I also do a prefatory comment that I am going to be writing about rape. Only with rereading Sullivan did I realize that I was making "little gestures" which gave people time to protect themselves.

Discussion of rape, either as a woman tells her own story or as women theorize together about rape, triggers a story-telling phenomenon among women. Because of the statistics about date rape, I have begun teaching sexual violence content in all of my classes where I can do so with integrity. I am attempting to give permission to the victims to name and tell their own stories. Inevitably, a classroom discussion or a set of readings elicits storytelling about sexual violence in the lives of many students.

I also have begun to preach on the topic of sexual violence whenever I am asked to do so. The same reality is present in churches as is present in classrooms. As part of the agreement to preach, I now ask congregational leaders to identify people who will

listen to survivor's stories after I am gone. I will not seduce the victims of sexual violence into storytelling by implicitly encouraging them to tell their story if no one is present and willing to listen to it.

In a Mennonite congregation in Phoenix in November, 1988, the pastor arranged a question and answer period after my sermon about the presence of sexual violence in the community of faith. As he opened that period, he announced to the congregation that there were people from the congregation who had volunteered to listen to stories of sexual violence in the lives of the congregation's members. He identified these people by name. Following his announcement, I was stunned by the numbers of women who stood up in this large Mennonite congregation (filled with regular members and winter visitors) who said, "I have been a victim; I am also willing to listen." In the process of talking, an older woman was overcome with emotion, but struggled on to say that she needed to hear this sermon in a Christian church because she had been unable to talk about an episode of violence during her early years in professional life.

If she is able to listen to the story of another woman's rape, the listening woman must begin a journey towards claiming her own early and continuous wounding

by the cultural story of rape. As she listens to her own story, as well as to the stories of others, she learns new questions about her own life, her society, and her relatedness with others. She becomes aware of her consciousness of rape and danger. Gradually she grows into the understanding that if she is to live (without becoming overwhelmed) through another's telling of the story of sexual violence, she must be willing to confront and live through the emotions of pain, despair, rage, terror and paranoia. She comes to understand that she must also name the violations of her own self within patriarchal culture.

In the course of the past three years of reading and study, I have consciously reviewed for the first time many of the dangerous situations I have experienced. In a real way, I only now understand my mother's fears for me as a young adult. Stubborn and risk-taking to the extreme, I refused to be isolated from life when I didn't have a man in my life to protect me. I back-packed and camped alone; I went into the inner city alone; I attended meetings and parked on dark streets alone. I also have realized that I was not naive. I have always reserved a section of my awareness for listening and observing. Clinical training, early in my twenties, reinforced that ability. And, when necessary, I have asked others for

help. I have not endured all of the terrors of female life alone. I have had female and male guides in self-protection efforts.

In the course of this study I have again learned that as the listening woman allows the other's wounds to affect her, she must allow her own wounds to re-wound her as well. She does this, not in masochistic preoccupation nor in counter-transference experiences of over-identification. Rather, she uses her own story to engage in a deliberate analysis of her wounds and their continuing forcefulness within her own life. She seeks to engage their assistance in teaching her how to listen to others who are wounded and need a supportive, caring listener. Like the shaman, she confronts the spirits of evil and insists they bend and yield so that the woman in need of healing can be healed.

Gradually the listening woman learns to allow the naming of wounds by others to elicit memories of ever deeper, ever more-hidden wounds within herself. She stops hiding from her own truth even as she seeks to hear the truth of another. As she attempts to answer her own life questions (those questions precipitated by another woman's search for answers to her life's questions), the listening woman begins to sort reality in new ways. She comes to understand, with Starhawk that she must reach into the pain to transform it.



Breathe deep  
 Feel the pain  
     where it lives deep in us  
     for we live, still  
     in the raw wounds  
     and pain is salt in us, burning  
 Flush it out  
 Let the pain become a sound  
     a living river on the breath  
 Raise your voice  
 Cry out. Scream. Wail  
     for the dismembering of the world

(Starhawk, 1988, pp. 30-31)

As the listening woman teaches herself about sexual violence, she learns to listen carefully to her own emotional responses. Responsiveness to the other's story teaches her a new responsiveness to her own. Listening and hearing the story of sexual violation becomes a way of seeing and hearing women's generalized fragmentation and dismemberment in a misogynist culture.

As Adrienne Rich suggests, "knowing [our dismemberment] makes the difference" (Rich, 1978, p. 267). Awareness and knowing becomes a way of re-membering. Re-membering becomes a journey into healing of the dis-membered self. In the effort to re-member her Self\*, the woman can share her life with others who are also attempting to reclaim their lives from dismemberment.

## Note

## Chapter 11

\*Mary Daly (1987) identifies the capitalized Self as the "original core of one's be-ing that cannot be contained within the State of possession; living spirit/matter: the psyche that participates in Be-ing". The non-capitalized self is "any of the many false identities inflicted upon women under patriarchy; the internalized possessor that covers and re-covers the Original Self" (p. 95).

## Conclusions

At the beginning of this dissertation we asked why women have such a long period of healing after an event of rape. We also asked what we can learn from studying the text of rape that will assist women to create healing for themselves. By means of thick description, we have gathered stories of rape from a variety of sources. We have examined data from the sciences, a variety of healing disciplines, cultural myths and stories and have heard the voices of survivors. In addition, an implicit joining of the author's story to all of these stories has been acknowledged. Granting space to the subjective elements of this study has provided me with a way to interact with the data as I have sorted through it much as a detective sifts data for clues. My own terrors have provided me with a window into the terrors of others.

I have attempted in the text itself to signal data or interpretations of data which seem promising ones for further study. One of these is consideration of the body's role in women's attempts to protect themselves during rape and to heal themselves after rape. Issues of predation and arousal are two of these biological issues needing further study.

Other issues include the ways in which women frame their awareness of rape in their discussions of it.

Identifying it as the ultimate violation or as the fate worse than death appear to me to be counterproductive. In a world filled with real life violence against many people in which rape is one form, among many, of torture, there are many violations of the human spirit. I was struck in the literature review by how many women authors used terrifying examples for illustrations of common realities in rape. There was one week at Notre Dame two summers ago (during the week I was reading women's writings about other women's rapes) when I was terrified to leave the library alone. Finally, one afternoon my self-control vanished and I fled the library sobbing. I went to a friend's house and the first thing I said was, "They are trying to terrify us. Women always tell the worst story they know."

Since then I have struggled to understand that unplanned, blurted out comment. I think all of us women who are dealing with rape survivors are attempting to detoxify our own terror and rage enough so that we can be helpful. By telling the worst possible rape story we know we may be attempting to defuse its power in our lives. But, paradoxically we may be fueling our terror and the subsequent power of rape to immobilize us from helping ourselves or others.

In this dissertation, I have used the stories of women who approximate a usual story of rape. While the mutilating atrocities are real and the women who have been mutilated and left to die need care and support, I think we must begin to teach ourselves and others that most women do survive rape and that many resist and avoid it. Only when we, as therapists, can handle our anxiety about a "usual" rape, will we be free to consider the needs of women who have been mutilated. We must set ourselves the goal of being ready to listen to any woman's story, no matter how terrifying. And we must accept that woman's need to tell us her story in all of its terror. But to consistently use the most terrifying examples we know to teach others about rape, is, it seems to me, strengthening women's resistance to learning about rape.

Encouraging women to frame rape as something which is inevitable is also self-defeating to women. As P. Bart's and P. H. O'Brien's (1985) research has indicated, a significant group of women do successfully resist rape attempts. In my personal friendship group, I know three women who have successfully resisted rape. All three were in very threatening situations. Each instantaneously decided, with her assailant's initial assault behaviors, that she would resist vigorously and forcefully. It is also important, however, for women to know that resistance does not guarantee freedom from rape. Each woman must

assess her situation and work towards her survival. There is no general approach to rape avoidance that will work for all women. There are no guarantees.

We need much more research about ways in which women successfully protect themselves so that we can begin to teach women how to avoid rape without avoiding their whole life. Retreating to a barred cell and restricting all human access to guarded relationships is not the way for women to find freedom. At the current moment, a prudent mixture of precautionary measures and a determination to live one's own life fully appear to be necessary attitudes for women to develop.

Learning how to shield one's self from the dangers of rape is not a very well understood process. The demography of fear and the demography of rape do not match in any predictable ways. What women believe is secure may not be so. The amount of stranger rape which takes place in familiar environments and the amount of acquaintance rape which takes place in familiar relationships puts common-sense notions of self-protection against rape in disarray.

Another area which has grown clearer for me is that not all rapes are the same. Each rape is unique in its combination of personalities, style of violence, and scenario of enactment. I believe that acquaintance rape and stranger rape have much in common. However,

I believe that reactions, in general, among survivors have slightly different trajectories. Women in stranger rapes know they have been raped. Women in acquaintance rapes may have more doubts about the realities of their violation. As I revealed in the discussion of date rapes, I am now a bit more uncomfortable with the idea of insisting a woman name her violation as rape. I think we need to honor her resistance to accepting the label of "rape victim" or "rape survivor" until we understand better what that issue expresses in women's experiences of the world.

M. Koss' (Warshaw, 1988) work with undergraduate women is an important first step in understanding young women's stories of date rape. Much more needs to be done with high school and college-age women who have been raped so that helpers can understand the women's own judgments about what has happened to them.

A second awareness about the uniqueness of rape for each woman is that stage theories, while initially helpful as typologies for defining statistical norms, are distinctly less useful in identifying expectable trajectories for all women's recovery processes. I believe we have reached the level of understanding with stage theories about recovery (crisis, stress, grief/loss) that these models can be used without further refinement. It is now time to evaluate and study

women's own descriptions of their experiences by means of other models and paradigms.

This dissertation has attempted to demonstrate the feasibility of using other conceptual frameworks as a way of gaining a more complete awareness of the complexity of healing after rape. The material on obedience grew out of the cultural stories of women's nature and out of rapist's control of the total situation during and after rape. It appears to me that this material could be explored much more thoroughly than this particular dissertation has allowed.

When discussing obedience as a double-bind construction with other women therapists, the intuitive response has been, "Yes, that fits." However, the Bateson materials are so recursive they are almost impenetrable. He gives examples to illustrate the double-bind which contradict his abstract descriptions of its structural process of enactment. It is possible, however, that the double-bind pattern of communication is so embedded in patriarchal culture that its opacity reflects that embeddedness.

Intuitively, however, I believe that rape serves as a double-bind, that obedience demands serve as double-binds, and that the responses encountered by women from others after rape often are double-binds. If Bateson is correct, and the double-bind reflects an



ever-more recursive epistemological structure in which the experience/sense making loop is distorted, then women's efforts by trial and error to find a solution to their pain after rape are nearly impossible. The only route out is that of transformation of the bind by shattering it from within. Sluzki, Beavein, Tornopolski, and Veron (1976) suggest several approaches to such shattering: meta-communication; physical or psychological withdrawal from the field of the bind; formation of crazy thinking; or the use of symbol in humor, art, or other transformative media (Sluzki and Ransom, 1976, pp. 234-236).

If my intuition is correct, learning to make precise meta-comments after rape should help the woman to free herself from the continuing power of the bind and, by implication, from the issuer of the binds. If double-bind theory is correct, the woman will, when able to name and identify the bind, find relief and the release of rage as she shatters the bind from within. Feminist analysis of patriarchal violence against women appears to me to offer the best meta-commentary on rape to date. We need to continue to examine double-binds to identify their messages and their meanings.

Finally, it seems to me that the emerging awareness of sexual violence as part of the personal history of persons with dissociative spectrum disorders (split personalities, borderline diagnoses, etc.) mandates a much closer look among women at the phenomenon of terror. This dissertation has adapted the Sullivanian model of anxiety theory. There may be other fairly complete theories of anxiety formation and resolution which need to be explored.

It is clear to me that dissociation during or after rape signifies the presence of overwhelming anxiety or panic. It is equally clear to me that most literature on rape recognizes the presence of anxiety, terror, and panic along with the dissociative process. However, I know of very little constructive study of the role of anxiety in the on-going trauma of rape. If women helpers and listeners could begin to see ways to assist women to feel safe enough to recapture both the affect and recall of the rape in an integrated manner, the treatment of rape survivors holds much more potential for real healing of the woman's self by her self.

This dissertation makes a belief statement about feminism and therapy. Throughout the course of researching and writing this dissertation, I have been aware of the anti-therapy critique of radical feminism.

(Daly, 1978, 1984, 1987; Morton, personal conversations, 1982-1984; and Raymond, 1986) I disagree with that critique. Many women in a culture of violence need the presence of someone who will help them make sense of their experiences. As a woman therapist, I have been helped by my therapists to heal my own wounds and to be able to lend support to others. As a woman therapist, I have seen women grow from cowering obedience to a posture of assertively claiming their life as valuable and worthy of other's respect.

I believe that feminism's radical critique of the pitfalls of patriarchal therapy is helpful. I especially am instructed by Morton and Daly on the potentialities of therapy to enslave one in re-telling an obsessive story to avoid telling a necessary story. However, I believe Morton's metaphor "hearing into speech" which has such power for women can be used helpfully or destructively. If, as feminist women, we insist that our politically correct view of that hearing is the only possible hearing, we do a disservice to many women who are in search of the ear that will hear them into speech and into life itself.

We know so little about women's healing after rape or other patriarchal atrocities that humility about our ignorance can be quite instructive. I believe that women who prepare themselves for the healing journey

can be found in friends and peers who are not professionally trained. But, I also believe that healing women can be found in the therapeutic disciplines. The double-bind of saying that "hearing into speech" is essential for all women's journey from silence into speech while limiting the presence of "listeners with a hearing ear" to "politically correct" feminist women must be shattered.

We must understand that it is not the healing woman who will heal the dismembered woman; it is not the listening woman who will give her speech; it is not the caring friend who will give her courage to live her life after sexual violation. While each of these is essential to the context of her healing, she must create her own healing and bring it into existence. J. Katz (1984) says she learned that she was alone in the world and recognized that she had to work through the healing process for herself. "I would have to struggle through the experience by myself. No one could take away the pain" (p.45).

We must recognize that the woman who has survived rape will be a woman giving birth after death; a woman giving birth to her new self. All of us who choose to surround her with love and compassion are but the midwives to her re-birth. The self which she will conceive and give birth to is her own self; once more

integrated, embodied, whole, and Re-Membered. May we  
bless her in her labors so that she may be able to  
return to us, so that she may share with us her journey  
and its lessons.

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